Shepherds

MAY, 1955

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For Commission on Membership and Evangelism in the Local Church

May, 1955

Vol. 9—No. 8

Geo. H. Jones, *Editor*

Gordon Pratt Baker, *Editorial Associate*

Edward Ferguson, Jr., *Editorial Assistant*

TIDINGS, 1908 Grand Avenue

Nashville 5, Tennessee

Methodist Pastors and District Superintendents receive SHEPHERDS—all 10 issues each year—free of charge.

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Total circulation this issue, 43,000

Cover Picture from wall picture used for over 50 years in the home of the Rev. and Mrs. Thomas F. Chilcote, Sr., of the Pittsburgh Conference

GOOD NEWS

FLASHES . . . from the Field

FAMILY LIFE WORKSHOP

LaGrange (Georgia) District holds Family Life Workshop . . . . 150 men and women from 38 charges participate.

1955 CUBA MISSION

Under the sponsorship of the Division of World Missions and the General Board of Evangelism, and under the direction of Bishop John Branscomb and Dr. Harry Denman, 178 guests assembled at Trinity Church in Miami, Florida, February 8, to receive instructions before flying to Cuba for a great evangelistic crusade. . . . Paying their own way, or being sponsored by their pastorates or Districts, the guests served tirelessly until February 17, when they reassembled in Havana for a report meeting . . . Results were impressive. . . . 809 public services were held . . . 67,478 persons attended. . . . 6,261 families were visited. . . . Commitments: first decisions, 2,257; number in candidate classes, 1,315; members received during the Mission, 333.

70 EVANGELISTS

Four Districts are planning for large teams of 70 Evangelists. . . . New Albany (Indiana) District, Dr. Floyd L. Cook, Superintendent; Covington (Kentucky) District, Dr. H. C. Ogles, Superintendent; Sardis (Mississippi) District, Dr. J. Noel Hinson, Superintendent; New Albany (Mississippi) District, Dr. W. L. Robinson, Superintendent. . . . Teams of 10 to 30 men working one to three weeks are destined to make an evangelistic impact in these Districts.

MEN'S PRAYER GROUP

Olean District Men's Prayer Group has record high attendance at Fillmore. . . . 77 men representing 24 churches . . . in a prayer interest reaching around the world from Japan to the son of the member who they prayed would find Christ.

NATIONAL WITNESS MISSION

National Christian Witness Mission . . . starting six years ago with 10 people meeting about a table in Chicago . . . the Annual National Youth Fellowship Christian Witness Mission held in 1955 at Columbus, Ohio, February 24-28, . . . participated in by more than 1,000 youth and adult workers with youth. Youth gave their witness in 65 churches in greater Columbus. . . . Interviewed, 2,055. . . . Recorded commitments: Profession of faith, 652; new MYF members, 835; transfers, 93; total commitments, 1,229. . . . The Joint Committee on Youth Evangelism,

representing the cooperation of The General Board of Evangelism and the General Board of Education, worked in conjunction with the MYF of the Ohio and Lexington Conferences and with District Superintendents and pastors . . . Chief addresses by Bishop Hazen G. Werner and Bishop Matthew W. Clair, Jr.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE CRUSADE

From all over America come reports of great values resulting from participation in the 1955 Church Attendance Crusade. J. Walter Browers, pastor, Centenary Methodist Church, Lawton, Oklahoma, says, "Now we are having three full services every Sunday. Last Sunday, at the 10:45 A.M. service, people were standing around the rear of the sanctuary, chairs were placed in the vestibules, and fifty were seated in the basement to listen over the P. A. system . . . then people were turned away and went across the street to the First Christian Church."

From the First Methodist Messenger of Birmingham, Alabama, Dr. Paul Hardin, pastor, this quotation is gleaned: "We are pleased about the way our people are responding to the Church Attendance Crusade. . . . It never ceases to thrill us to see that great old sanctuary overflowing with people. . . . Last Sunday morning, after chairs had been placed in every available space and the extra seats in the choir had been occupied, the congregation overflowed into the small auditorium (remember that there are loudspeakers in there). . . . And what a magnificent night congregation we had! . . . was interesting to see what denominations were represented by our visitors, wasn't it?"

Kirkwood Methodist Church in Missouri, H. S. Anglin, pastor reports that in January attendance advanced from an average of 375 to an average of 535 . . . the Sunday school, from an average of 387 to an average of 483, and contributions increased by 30% . . . was having two Sunday morning services . . . now has gone to three.

THE PRAYER LIFE MOVEMENT

Few things The Methodist Church has ever attempted have merited the widespread interest being accorded the 1955 Chain of Prayer. More than 1,100 churches have accepted an invitation to carry on a vigil of prayer for a prescribed 24-hour period. Every state in the union is represented, as well as Cuba. Nothing the Church has developed has received so much newspaper and magazine coverage. Grace Methodist Church, Brooklyn, Iowa . . . membership 528 . . . had over 500 participating in 24-hour prayer vigil. . . . Pastor and laymen report a deepened spiritual experience. World Day of Prayer . . . Interracial-Interdenominational Prayer Life Mission at Kingsport, Tennessee . . . February 25, 1955 . . . attendance 1,000 . . . representing 77 churches . . . 8 states . . . 800 local people participating . . . fine follow-up program instituted . . . excellent prayer vigil.

The Rev. G. F. Hubbartt, a retired member of the North Indiana Conference, acting as an unofficial and unpaid chaplain of the Methodist Memorial Home, Warren, Indiana, enlisted 124 members, average age 83, to pray for the objectives of The Prayer Life Movement. A 24-hour vigil being impractical . . . the 124 aged members signed up to pray daily.

Mrs. C. C. Sapp reports that the First Methodist Church, Albany, Georgia, the Rev. Ralph Porterfield, pastor, had 361 praying, seeking members engaging in the 24-hour prayer vigil . . . 126 members of St. Anthony Park Methodist Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, engaged in a 24-hour prayer vigil, March 3 and 4, in which they sought God's guidance in the decision to be made regarding the "Church Completion Program" which, if carried out, would provide for the Wesley Foundation. . . . They request the prayers of other churches in the chain.

In May Issue

CROSS OVER THE BRIDGE
F. E. Davison
First Christian Church
South Bend, Indiana

HE CARRIED JESUS' CROSS
T. T. Faichney
First United Church
Galt, Ontario, Canada

CHRIST'S CREATIVE IMAGINATION
A. L. Kinsolving
St. James' Episcopal Church
New York, New York

TURNING SORROW INTO A SONG
Duke K. McCall
President, Southern Baptist
Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

SERMONS ARE NOT TO BE ENJOYED?
Karl H. A. Rest
Emmanuel Church, E. & R.
Manchester, Michigan

FORMULA FOR PEACE OF SOUL
J. Richard Sneed
First Methodist Church
Los Angeles, California

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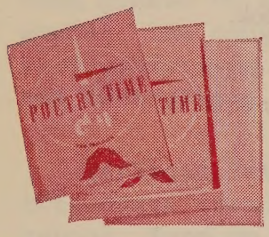

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Is the CHRISTIAN HOME in Danger?

by
Bishop Arthur J. Moore
Atlanta Area

THE CHRISTIAN HOME is the mother of all essential institutions of our civilization. St. Paul exhorts a friend to salute the church "which is in thy home." Before there were cathedrals, rituals, and priests, the Church of God was established in the home of God-fearing parents. The first hospital was organized when some tender-hearted mother with home remedies ministered to the ills of her children. The first school was born when truth-loving parents, out of their poverty, purchased a few good books, of which the Holy Bible was one, and spread them before the growing minds of their children. Turn where you will to all these essential institutions of our nation, to those sources from which have come the decencies of civilization and the grace and culture of Christian life, and you discover they had their birth in the Christian home.

It is not easy to define a Christian home. One has said, "It is the brooding place for one's spirit, the restorer of one's energy, the quiet haven into which one can go to escape the storms that beat upon the outside world." Another has said, "Home is where love lives"—not where it comes occasionally, but where it *lives*. If the mansion on the broad avenue has not love, it is not home; and, if the narrow-walled cottage of the poor man has love, it is home.

But in our time damage has been done to the stability and influence of the Christian home. If certain trends are not reversed, and that right early, the damage might be irreparable.

I

One of the alarming trends in our modern life is the growing tendency to dissociate marriage from its spiritual or religious significance. Many of our popular books and movies seem to be dead set against the old vow of loyalty and fidelity assumed in the marriage ceremony. To listen to them, our young people might assume that the fidelity pledged at the altar of marriage is not to last "until death us do part," but only until incompatibility or temperament us do part.

We must again teach our young people that marriage is not a civil contract, but a spiritual union. No vows are more sacred than those assumed in marriage, and no other foundation will avail for a happy and enduring home.

It was upon the foundation of the home that Jesus Christ placed the noble structure of Christianity in a corrupt and dissolute age. If we undermine the Christian home, we endanger every

Illustration above is a reproduction of the painting, *Grace,* by Vantier. Photo Courtesy Three Lions.

good thing in government and human society.

II

Another destructive influence against the preservation of the home is found in the fact that many fathers are shirkers when it comes to their duty as religious leaders.

The Old Testament tells the story of a lad who ran across Oriental harvest fields under a hot sun to be at his father's side. When he drew near the place where his father stood, the lad was overcome by the heat and fell unconscious at his father's feet. The father turned to a servant and said, "Carry the lad to his mother." Never will I understand why he, the father, did not carry the lad in his own arms. But then, as now, the father left to the mother the entire responsibility. He measured his duty in terms of making a living. He reasoned that his duty was limited to house, clothing, bread, and meat. He left such things as education, moral standards, and religious nurture to the mother's responsibility.

Men must learn that long before God ordained a priesthood, he ordained fathers to be priests in their own households. God pity the children, grown to maturity, who discover at last that the father was a good provider, but had no interest in their minds, characters, and souls!

It also happens that sometimes a mother becomes so occupied with secular pursuits that she neglects her home and children. When the Bible would paint its picture of frivolous cruelty, it does not show us a Nero fiddling while his capital burns. It pictures a beautiful girl carrying in her arms the blood-stained head of the prophet of God.

We frequently complain at the taxes we are called upon to pay. We speak often of the "luxury tax." But luxury does have a tax. We can become too much interested in the merry-go-round of trivialities. Such a woman is described in the Bible, when it speaks of one who lives in pleasure, as being dead while she lives.

Let it never be forgotten that, to have a great child, the mother must herself be noble.

III

What a fearful toll is taken by the rush of modern life! Secularism—which is but another name for what our fathers called worldliness—has taken its toll of religious idealism. Life, for parents and children alike, is surrounded by conditions and forces which have sprung up so swiftly as to take us unawares. The tempo of modern life has become so accelerated that it is difficult to give attention to those things that make for faith.

Life has been so highly secularized that faith and devotion have been made difficult. To these destructive forces must be added the subtle effect of inadequate religious teaching. In our so-called emancipation from a religion of authority, we swung to an imaginary freedom in which the great truths of religion have been questioned and often ignored.

Religion gave to our fathers and mothers the certainty and consolation of God's presence and power. In that faith, they found a guide for this life and a hope for the life to come. Who will deny that many have missed their God-given destiny because they have neglected the deep devotion, the higher loyalties, and the simple faith which enabled our parents to walk with God?

The loss of the sacramental value of the family-gathering is little short of tragic. If we could live together, read together, and pray together, we would stay together. In the kind of world in which we now live, we cannot hope to save Christianity, or the values of our Christian inheritance, unless we have a strong, vigorous, and Christian home life.

The political and social ideas that have lighted our steps down the paths of freedom had their origins in Christian teaching. Their roots have been nourished and sustained by Christian convictions taught to children by God-fearing parents. Only homes grounded in God can endure. If our nation is ever cut off from these roots, it will perish.

—Harold M. Lambert

Win the Family and You Win the World

by Nels F. S. Ferre
Professor of Philosophical Theology
School of Religion, Vanderbilt University

Win the family for Christian living and the world is won. The family is the seat of our basic troubles and the source of our noblest hopes. This claim is no mere theory. This is factual truth.

We now know how deeply children are affected by their homes. For a while some psychologists went to extremes, teaching that children are permanently formed in infancy. This is not true. Human nature is plastic and continually open to change. It is most plastic, however, in early childhood; and character is more basically set there than some like to think. Our parents do not stop disciplining us when the physical action of spanking stops nor do they cease spoiling us when we leave home. Their dispositions, right or wrong, become formative conditions of our lives with which we have to contend as long as we live.

The fruit seldom falls far from the tree. Sometimes it is carried elsewhere by extraneous forces. Not only apples but children are picked up and planted, for good or for ill, in alien soil. No parent should therefore judge himself completely responsible for the conduct of a wayward child nor must he boast too personally of a successful offspring. There is real freedom for the child, and other influences than parental ones help make him what he is. But for the most part the fruit falls nearby. Children are usually mirrors in whom parents can see reflected their own images. For this reason, because of their own guilt, the older generation tends to be either too hard or too easy on its successor.

Jesus grasped the right formula for a new life. "Make the tree good." The good life can bear good fruit, not only in thoughts and deeds, but especially in good children. The most important crop to care for is the family fruit. The surest way to strengthen the spiritual life is to strengthen the spiritual life of the family. Children, to become creative and co-operative members of the family, need to experience genuine love at home from their early infancy. Newer understanding of physical beginnings makes the serene, believing mother a blessing even before the child is born. She who carries a new life may care for her child's basic spiritual structure more than she thinks by leading a life holy unto the Lord and peaceful for the world.

Children need a constant home environment of genuine love. Pious phrases or forced grins cannot fool them. They know love with their whole being and can separate appearance from reality. When parents abide in God's love day by day both with each other and with the children, that love becomes the source of the child's most basic security. Sham makes children detest the creed the parents profess. Rebellious ministers' children seek the reality of love away from all its false pretenses. Marriage quarrels are bad and sharp words hurt the children, but what really counts is the steady reality of the parents' love for each other and for them.

Not only for individuals, however, whether children, husbands, or wives, but also for the church the family is the primary unit. Adults can be won more easily for the church through concern for their children than through any other motive. Here is the opportunity of the church, often mentioned but seldom used.

The corporate nature of the church and of the family in the church should be maintained as well as discussed. Yet how few families constitute a church at home, and how few worship as families in public. If this cannot be done without disturbing the minister and congregation, something is radically wrong and the worship is faulty. Let reverence and discipline plus hallowed joy incorporate the small family community within the larger local church until both unite intensively and extensively in expressing and fostering the family of God. When that happens within the very fiber of family life, the best human material for a better world has united with the fullest divine means. Win the family for the Christian enterprise, then the world is saved.

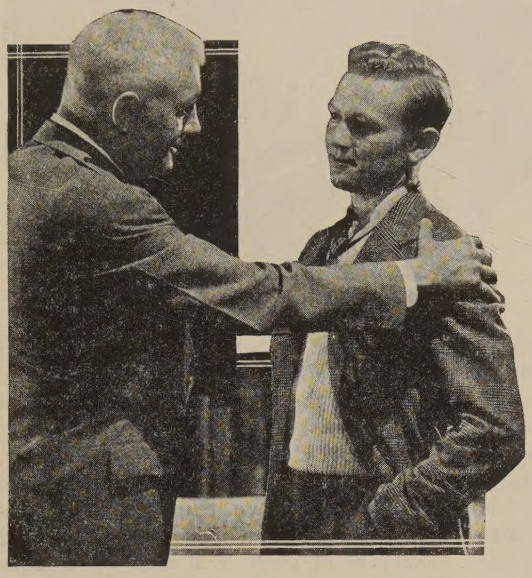
The family will not be won, however, without an effective approach through the devotional life. We tend to ignore this center of Christian living, as if it would take care of itself. Evil wins by default. We blame our busy schedules. Father must hurry to work. Or mother has to get the children to school. Or brother has his vacation and is entitled to sleep in the morning or to be with his date at night. There is thus no time for family devotions. Others dismiss it as old-fashioned.

But family devotions are the most important part of family life. The family altar stands unavoidably at the center of its life, lit and used, or dark and abused. The family is a church by nature, a community under God, either free and outreaching or frustrated and self-concerned. There is always time for what is deemed important.

The proper time can be found somehow. Families can get up half an hour earlier. Much sleep is wasted by tensions. The worshiping family finds rest and peace in its worship. A new happiness can heal and refresh the weary spirit. So wake the sleepy boy! Shake the drowsy girl! Leave the dishes on the table and the newspaper on the front step and join in duty or in joy the feast of family devotions! Some can do it at night, if the ages of the children permit. Or time can be taken before breakfast or dinner. Special services may be held on Sundays, holidays, or days of celebration. The time is there! Members away from home can read the same passages and pray together in memory, in the divine presence and in anticipation of reunion. Sometimes people may have to have devotions in smaller family sections, through force of circumstance. The Christian family, in any case, lives by family devotions. Strengthen those and you strengthen the family. Win the families and you win the world.

Adapted from *Strengthening the Spiritual Life Through Family Devotions*, published by THE UPPER ROOM as an extract from *Strengthening the Spiritual Life*, by Nels F. S. Ferré. Copyright by Harper and Brothers. Used by permission.

Exploring Christian Theology



WITH YOUTH

by Fred Cloud
Assistant Editor
Youth Publications
The Methodist Church

YOUNG people love adventure. The conquest of Everest and of K-2, the feat of breaking through the sound barrier, the possibility of interplanetary travel—these are the things that capture the imagination of youth. On the other hand, to the average young person in the second half of the twentieth century, theology probably seems about as exciting as an afternoon tea party. If considered at all, it is probably viewed as the preacher's private domain, or, at best, as of only incidental interest to the layman.

Adventure of Faith

Such a view of theology is little short of tragic. For no conquest of nature can match the adventure of faith. The search for God and the experience of being found by God surpass all other adventures, even as a sunset surpasses any painting of it. Rightly understood, theology is the record of men's encounter with their Creator. It is not an armchair exercise for abstract thinkers; rather, it is a song of praise sung by men who have seen the Almighty.

Christian theology is not static. It is not a set quantity of "beliefs" to be imparted. It is not a puzzle with a given number of pieces to be fitted neatly together. Certainly, it is not a room full of intellectual furniture to be arranged and re-arranged according to the prevailing fashions in religious opinion.

In the best sense, theology is a search, an exploration, a quest for understanding God and His will for mankind. It can never be fixed and final (thus dull), because God is a living God. His will must always be understood in relation to the present moment in history. Individuals, groups, and nations are constantly changing in their relationships with one another and with God. These changes must be taken into account if theology is to be relevant.

Perhaps at this point we can see one reason why theology is so often dismissed—especially by youth—as being only incidental. It is too often presented in categories of timelessness and spacelessness and thus never intersects the path of our daily walk.

Because God's Spirit works in and through human beings, new insights and new measures of understanding of the Christian gospel should be expected by all who seek to know God. He is seeking to lead us into a full understanding of His truth, which embraces everything from the structure of the atom to the movement of the farthest cluster of the Milky Way, from the miracle of birth to the nobility of mature Christian personality.

New Understanding

Might we not with accuracy describe the Christian theologian as one who earnestly and eagerly seeks new understanding of God-as-revealed-in-Christ? For is it not true that "in Christ dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"? We can never fathom the depths of the personality and character of Jesus Christ. The study of Christ's life and teachings is not like digging gold out of a mine, for in the course of time even the richest veins of gold are exhausted. Rather, it is somewhat like tracking the stars with a telescope. Even as we see their light, they have moved on millions of light years through space.

Everest and K-2 have been conquered. Men have flown faster than sound. A radio signal has been bounced off the moon. These are great achievements. But they are more than matched in the realm of the spirit. Moses saw the majesty of a moral order. Amos glimpsed justice. Hosea sensed the depths of God's forgiving love. Jesus Christ overcame sin and death.

Spiritual Quest

Once they gain the perspective that faith is an adventure rather than a coldly calculated body of beliefs, youth will come to share our enthusiasm for the spiritual quest. In the process, we will be surprised at how much they can teach us. Their inquiring minds will record truths that might slip past us. But we will also share with our young people insights that can come only through years of Christian experience. Once they have really begun to explore Christian theology with us, they will never turn back!

"Family Night" WITH FLAIR

by Isabelle Loar Farnham
Cedar Falls, Iowa

ASSIMILATING new members into the active fellowship of the Church is one of the major concerns of any alert Commission on Membership and Evangelism. "The fellowship of kindred minds" which is "like to that above" has little chance to develop if individuals remain aloof.

Why not try a family night supper that is different? Why not try the hostess plan?

The traditional family night supper in your church may have always consisted of the "pot luck," "carry in," or "basket" dinner in which all the food is put on the serving table and people file by cafeteria style. Many otherwise agreeable people object to the shuffling line and to the fact that the first in line get the choice food while the last often get only crumbs.

A New Spirit

The hostess plan would change all that. In fact, the hostess plan for family night suppers will give you a crowd limited only by the number of tables and chairs your church owns or can borrow. It will generate a spirit among your members, old and new, that is almost tangible in its effects.

The hostess plan starts, literally, with the tables and chairs.

If your church possesses 20 tables and your dining room can hold 200, you will begin by securing 20 couples to act as hosts and hostesses. One couple assigned to each table.

These couples are to invite to their table enough people to fill it. If the table seats 10, there will be room for four other couples. Fewer couples may be invited if there are children. However, it is better for the menu planning if at least four couples are invited, with a smaller table used at the end for the children.

Planning the Menu

Each hostess has the task of planning the menu. In many cases she herself will furnish the meat dish. She will ask for a vegetable, a salad, rolls and butter, and a dessert in the amounts necessary from each of her lady "guests," who will also provide her own dishes. Coffee is served by a group from the Woman's Society.

The hostess is asked to prepare her table as if she were having guests in her own home. Some hostesses may bring their best tablecloths. Some will use gay paper table covers in keeping with the season. Many will have flowers or a blooming plant, or some other centerpiece to beautify the tables.

When grace is said and the group sits down, the meal is served as if those present were actually enjoying the hospitality of a lovely home.

The main value of this method is that the hostesses are given names of new members or prospective members whom they are asked to include in their invitations. The intimate fellowship of a small table surrounded by congenial people is invaluable in promoting among the newcomers a feeling of belonging. For this reason, the table groups should be kept small. In this way, getting acquainted will be easier.

Since this is "family night," the program should be very carefully planned. If the older children are to remain for the entire evening, the program should be designed to appeal to them as well as to the adults. For example, there may be a good movie, a play, a magician, a Boy Scout demonstration, or something of similar character. If the program calls for a speaker in whom only the adults would be interested, entertainment for the children should be provided elsewhere in the church, perhaps in one of the departmental rooms, where games, or songs and stories, would keep them happy.

Also, because this is "family night," the hour of closing should be rigorously observed. An evening which begins with the blessing at 6:30 could very easily be over by 8:30. This schedule would provide for an hour each of table fellowship and entertainment.

Effective Techniques

As the plan develops, techniques for handling different situations will be discovered. For instance, the problem of how to accommodate the people who have not been contacted by any hostess, but who nevertheless want to attend, is one that can be solved by educating everyone to call the committee or the church office if an invitation is desired. These people can then be put in touch with the hostess who has exhausted her prospect list and does not know where to turn in filling her table. Or one couple from such a group could be named as host and hostess and be given the names of others to invite so as to "build" a table. After the plan has been in opera-

tion for a short time, everyone comes to understand that hostesses are not psychic and that telephoning for a reservation is a helpful thing to do.

Master of Ceremonies

To designate a different layman as master of ceremonies each time is an excellent way to encourage lay participation. He and his wife are then host and hostess for the head table. They have the privilege of providing for the guest speaker, or for other guests, if there are any. Any hostess is honored at the opportunity of decorating the head table and entertaining the guest of the evening.

Expenses for the speaker or for the film rental, for buying coffee and cream, or for other incidentals, can be met easily by explaining to the group that programs do not just happen and that the group can share in underwriting the evening through an offering left on the table. Usually, this offering will be liberal enough to support the program adequately.

A number of refinements can be suggested. A nursery should be provided for the very small children. Perhaps a "baby sitter" can be employed to tend the nursery if no one wants to miss the program.

Instructions should be given to the hostesses not to clear the tables until the very end of the program so that the continuity of the evening is not interrupted and the affair lengthened.

The committee should contact each hostess the day before the event to see exactly how many people, including children, will be at her table so that a small extra table can be provided, if necessary, and the exact number of chairs placed when the dinner hour arrives.

Sizeable table placards with the hosts' names should be made so that guests can easily find to which "family table" they belong. Dowels cut into two-foot lengths and stuck into blocks of wood serve very well to keep the name cards high enough to be seen. If the dining room is big and the crowd is large, a chart of the dining room might be drawn, showing where each "family" is placed.

Small groups might like to prepare tables for their group alone. The MYF, for instance, could plan their own menu. They could have their own host and hostess. Thus they could be easily excused for school affairs. The Wesleyan Service Guild might plan a table or two for those single persons who may prefer to be together.

Lasting Results

The hostess plan for family nights is a lot of work, but so is everything else that gives satisfactory and lasting results. If undertaken with the spiritual welfare of new members constantly in mind, it cannot help adding immeasurably to the strength of the interlocking structure of any local church.

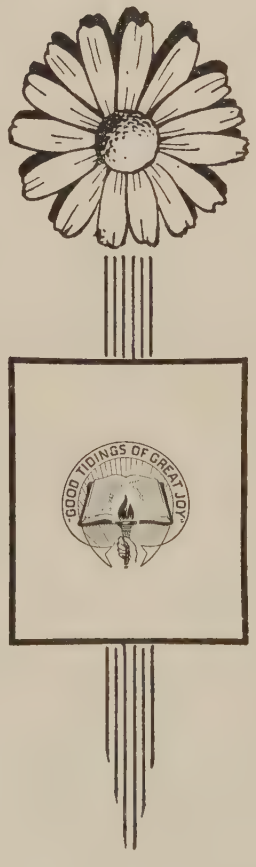
FOR EVERY CHURCH

Two useful booklets of 16 pages each may be used in the church effectively during the period between Easter and Pentecost. If pastors only knew of these great works in religious art and writing, they would order them immediately.

"Why I Believe in Jesus," by John W. Burton, is a beautifully illustrated, two-color leaflet containing scenes depicting the Ascension, the Sermon on the Mount, the Emmaus Road experience, and the Risen Christ.

"When Methodists Baptize," by Bishop F. Gerald Ensley, is a clear and authoritative statement of the Methodist position on baptism. It is also illustrated with scenes from Bible stories and pictures of the rite of baptism.

Both booklets are published by TIDINGS and are priced at 5c each, $4.00 per 100.



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by

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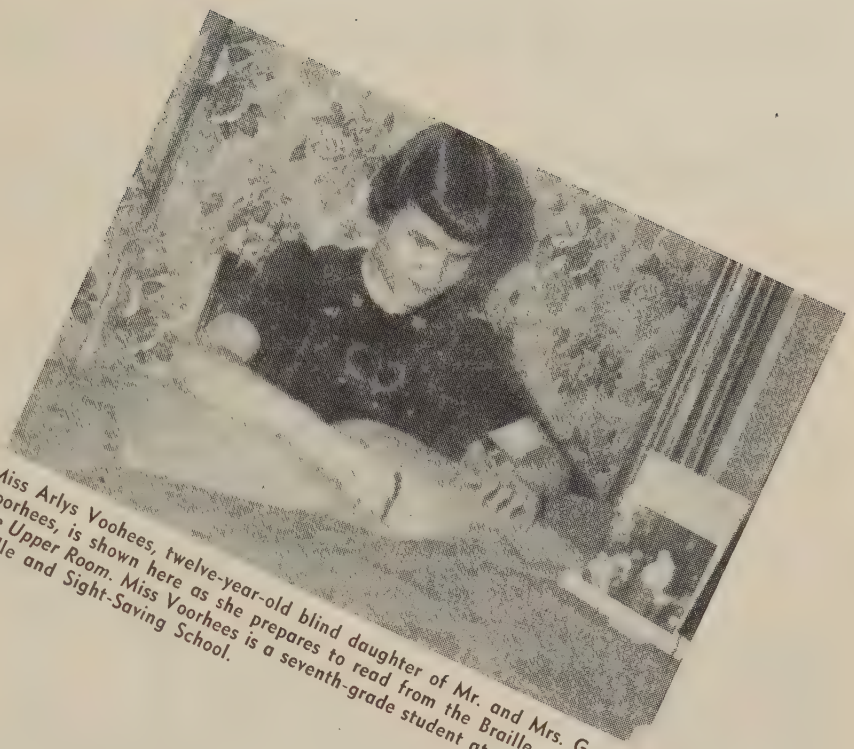
TIDINGS: Headquarters for Evangelistic Materials
1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 5, Tennessee

Mrs. Leon McCluer, of Jacksonville, Alabama, shown above at the lower right, with her church school class of five girls and thirteen boys. Each one has a copy of *The Upper Room*. The Sunday class session is opened by having each one tell which selection for the week impressed him the most.



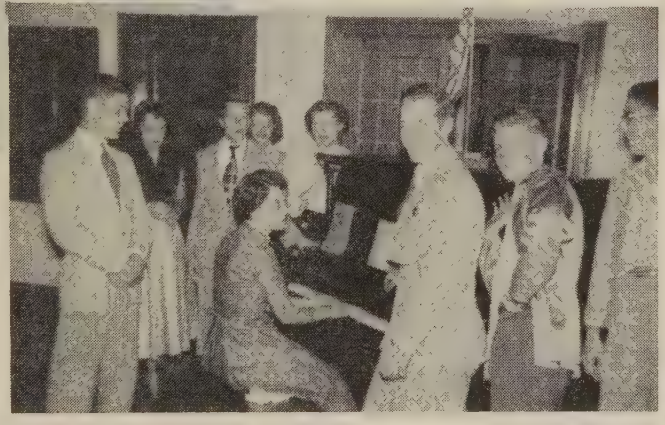
Miss Arlys Voohees, twelve-year-old blind daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Voorhees, is shown here as she prepares to read from the Braille edition of *The Upper Room*. Miss Voorhees is a seventh-grade student at the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School.

The Upper Room

Dedicated Hearts Make Christian Homes

From a counsellor for the Senior Youth Fellowship of the Evangelical United Brethren Church comes this story of the usefulness of *The Upper Room* in stimulating Bible reading and prayer among the young people.

Shown above are Mrs. Jury and her son, Lewis, reading from a copy of *The Upper Room*. They get their copy through the Senior Youth Fellowship.



"Since the Youth Fellowship has been using *The Upper Room* for their daily devotions, the parents of the youth are reading it every day, also." To the left is a picture of some of the Senior Young People gathered around the piano.

Some of the members of the Homebuilder's Class of the First Methodist Church, Murfreesboro, Tenn., are shown below holding a service at the city jail. The Homebuilder's Class see to it that each prisoner receives a copy of *The Upper Room*.

Photo, below, shows a Japanese Christian, confined to her bed, reading a copy of the Japanese edition of *The Upper Room* with the help of a reading rack. The copy of *The Upper Room* was sent to her by a condemned murderer who found the Saviour through reading its pages.

Northeastern Jurisdiction

Features National Leaders

July 10-17, 1955

The Northeastern Jurisdictional Board of Evangelism and the General Board of Evangelism announce a second "Summer Conference on Evangelism" to be held at place to be announced, from Sunday, July 10, through July 17, 1955. Designed for local church leaders in evangelism, the Conference is planned especially for the chairman and members of the Commission on Membership and Evangelism. Its purpose is to deepen the personal faith and religious experience of the delegates, and to exchange evangelistic "know how" to strengthen the program in the home church.

Branscomb

Each morning from 11 to 12 there will also be a vital service carrying a teaching and training content on the relationship between evangelism and church attendance, prayer, Bible study, family devotions, witnessing, and tithing. Each evening there will be a threefold program beginning with a quiet prayer and scripture session in the chapel, to be followed in the auditorium by a guided testimony, witness, praise, and prayer session.

A team of the finest evangelistic leaders will be brought to make this conference and its program a supreme occasion.

Leaders, and the areas in which they will work, are as follows:

Ferre

Bishop John Branscomb, resident Bishop of the Jacksonville Area, will preach on Sunday, July 10, at 10:30 A.M. and 7:30 P.M., in the auditorium. He will also preach at the mass meeting each weekday night through Thursday. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, July 15, 16, 17, Bishop Marshall Reed, resident Bishop of the Detroit Area, will preach. Music will be under the direction of Dr. and Mrs. Walter Eddows (staff musicians at Ocean Grove for 14 years), assisted by two trumpeters and a large chorus choir.

Reed

All meetings, with the exception of the 7:00 P.M. prayer service, will be held in the Auditorium.

Monday through Saturday

Dr. Nels F. S. Ferré will lead a rich series of meetings on "Finding God Through Prayer and the Bible." Dr. Ferré, Professor of Philosophical Theology at Vanderbilt University, is author of "Meeting God Through the Bible" and booklets on family worship and faith. He is internationally acclaimed as a Christian thinker and leader.

Dr. Berlyn V. Farris is Executive Director of the Joint Department of Evangelism of the National Council of Churches. He was an eminently successful pastor at First Methodist Church, Eugene, Oregon, before coming to his present position.

He is well versed in the evangelistic problems and opportunities of the local church.

For further information, write C. Lloyd Daugherty, Jr., 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 5, Tennessee.

Farris

Daily Schedule for Evangelistic Conference

SUNDAY, July 10
10:30 A.M. & 7:30 P.M.—Bishop John W. Branscomb

Mornings

MONDAY THROUGH SATURDAY, July 11-16
8:30-9:20 A.M.—Prayer and Bible Study, Dr. Nels F. S. Ferré
"Meeting God Through Prayer and the Bible"
9:30-10:20 A.M.—Workshop on the Local Church, Dr. Farris (and staff)
"Evangelism in the Local Church"
10:20-10:45 A.M.—Question and Answer Period
"Evangelism in the Local Church"
11:00-11:55 A.M.—Worship Services
Theme: "The Holy Habits"

Afternoons

All afternoons are open. This gives opportunity for rest and recreation, personal interviews with leaders, such interest groups as may develop and a choir rehearsal and informal course on the place of music in the local church. Mornings are full so afternoons can be open.

Evenings

7:00-7:30 P.M.—Prayer meeting
7:30-8:15 P.M.—Testimony meeting, of song and praise
8:15-9:00 P.M.—Preaching — Monday through Thursday, Bishop John W. Branscomb
Friday and Saturday, Bishop Marshall R. Reed

SUNDAY, July 17
10:30 A.M. & 7:30 P.M.—Bishop Marshall R. Reed

A FELLOWSHIP of Intercessory Prayer

by Grantas E. Hoopert
Pastor, The Methodist Church
Mifflinburg, Pennsylvania

THEY were true friends, this aging man and this stalwart youth. Their friendship attracted much attention. Outwardly, there seemed to be no reason for this beautiful relationship. The secret was revealed when the lad prepared to leave the community. In speaking to some friends about this relationship, he said, "We are friends who pray for one another at a certain time every day. God keeps us loving one another that way." This is a thrilling testimony to the power of intercessory prayer.

So that this "Gospel of Love" might permeate the entire membership of our church, a Fellowship of Intercessory Prayer was started. We began in the knowledge that all human life is one, that we are vitally and inseparably joined with our fellow-Christians, that God sees His children as interdependent, and that He desires for them to unite in responding to His will. Because we know this, we know that intercession is necessary in the Christian fellowship.

For what it might be worth to others, we share our Fellowship of Intercession pastoral letter and cite a few examples of the response to this simple Fellowship of Prayer.

Numerous Responses

A sample of the letter is appended to this article. It reminds the members that the pastor plans to pray for them and their families by naming them specifically at a certain time at the altar of the church. Opportunity is given for the people to submit requests for prayer. They are asked to pray wherever they are during their announced prayer time.

I should like to cite several examples of the numerous responses to this Fellowship of Intercessory Prayer.

A man unaccustomed to praying said, "I was repairing a roof on a rather high building at my prayer time. I bowed my head right there. I never felt quite so good inside as at that moment."

A mother, reading the letter at the breakfast table, reminded the family to be certain to make 10 o'clock "God's minute wherever you are today."

A lady was being taken into the operating room for a serious operation at her prayer time. She said, "At the most dreaded time, I wasn't afraid."

A young mother hoped that her child would be born at the family's prayer time. She expressed great joy that the child was born so close to that time. It was as though the child were born on the wings of prayer.

A boy in school said, "Our family prayer time came during geography class. I guess the teacher thought I was studying geography. I was, but I took time out to pray, too."

Power of Prayer

In one instance the prayer letter was opened by the daughter-in-law who, upon seeing the church letterhead, decided that the church was asking for money and was about to destroy the letter. Just then the mother-in-law asked that the letter be read. They were surprised to find that it was a notice of intercessory prayer for them. The father-in-law, hearing the letter read, was greatly moved. He presented himself at the altar of the church at the

family prayer time and accepted Christ as his Saviour.

Especially did the shut-ins feel the power of their prayer fellowship. Some desired the names of other shut-ins so that among themselves they might establish a Fellowship of Intercessory Prayer.

This Fellowship of Intercessory Prayer has instilled in many in our church a concern for the spiritual welfare of others. A man was suddenly stricken ill during the night. An intercessory prayer was made during the regular morning worship service. It was continued by others in their homes. Nearly every letter sent to him at the hospital indicated the participation of the people in intercessory prayer. When he ordered the man's discharge, the doctor said, "We used everything known to medical science to help your particular situation. It all helped, but I feel that the many prayers of your many friends did the most for you."

From these experiences we are convinced that the Christian Church can and must recapture the power of intercessory prayer. Therefore, the Fellowship of Intercessory Prayer has become an accepted, regular, and necessary part of the ministry of our church.

YOUR PASTOR'S PERSONAL PRAYER PERIOD

Dear Christian Friends:

From time to time it is my purpose and plan to pray for all the members of our church, their families and friends, calling their names and praying specifically for each one of them at the altar of our church.

I will include a number of families in my prayer on certain days at certain times.

I will be kneeling at the altar of our church offering prayer for you and your family – naming each one of you before God on

---

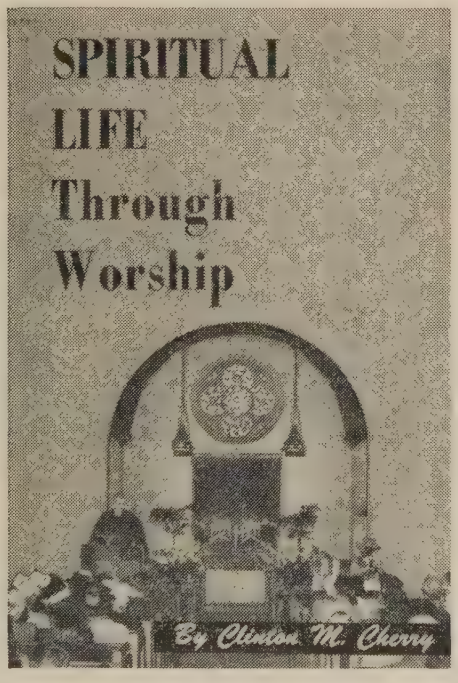
On the above-named day and hour will you bow in a moment of silent prayer wherever you are?

If there are any specific requests for prayer from you or your family, please turn them in to me on the Sunday prior to your prayer time.

May God bless you because, "If with all your heart ye truly seek Him, ye shall find Him."

Yours in the Saviour's Name,

Grantas E. Hoopert, Minister



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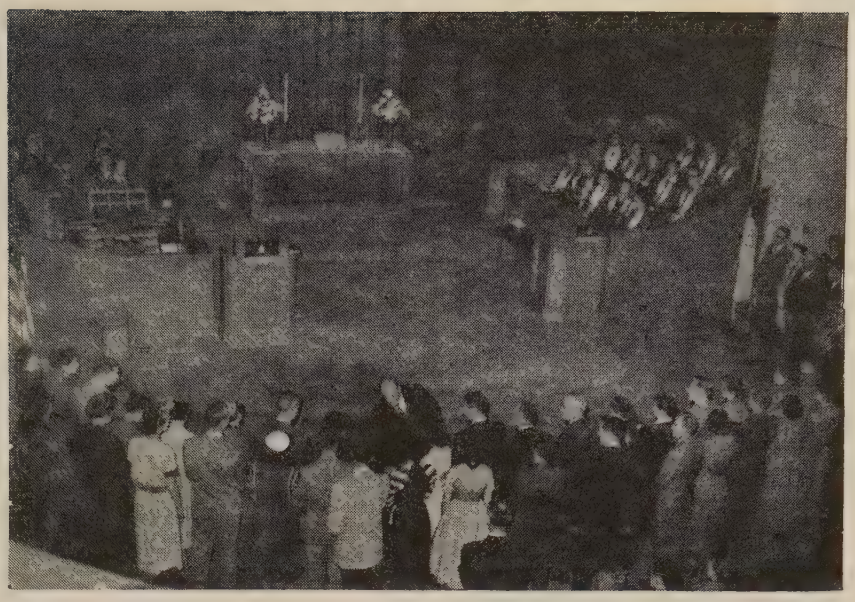
by

E. Wilson Perry

Pastor, First Methodist Church

Omaha, Nebraska



TRAINING FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

IN the introductory statement of the service for receiving persons into the Church, one finds the following:

"Into this holy fellowship the *persons* before you, who *have* received the Sacrament of Baptism, who *have* learned the nature of these privileges and these duties, and who *have* also been instructed in the teachings and the aims of The Methodist Church, *come* seeking admission."

When I publicly read that statement, in the early years of my ministry, I felt somewhat disturbed because I did not feel that the persons called to the altar of the church to be received into its membership had been duly instructed in the teachings and aims of The Methodist Church.

A number of years went by, and I did very little to correct the situation. Then the realization came over me that something must be done, not only to satisfy my own feeling in the matter, but primarily to help people who were coming into the Church. It did not seem fair to ask people to become affiliated with the most vital and significant institution within the orbit of their personal experience without giving them the opportunity to come to an understanding of that institution, its reason for being, its practices and procedures, and its sense of destiny within the framework of the Christian gospel.

Some years ago I read a statement by a chaplain with respect to many of the young men in service. He said, "Thousands of young men, members of our churches, serving in the armed forces, are religiously illiterate." That was a disturbing statement; and, as a Methodist minister, I felt that I had done very little to arrest the religious illiteracy in the lives of the people who entered the church of which I was pastor. Fortunately, today, there are numerous helps being published to remedy this condition.

Photo above shows reception of Membership class at First Methodist Church, Omaha, Nebraska.

Class Sessions

It seemed to me that there are four important phases which should be explored for the benefit of individuals coming into church membership. These four divisions provide the basis for our discussions.

1. *The Christian and His Bible*

While it is not possible to give an elaborate course on the Bible in the allotted time, it *is* possible for the instructor to present a point of view with respect to the Bible which will stimulate further thought and study and which will heighten appreciation of this book, so important in the lives of Christian people.

2. *The Christian and His Church*

The church member should be familiar with the influences which affected the establishment of the Protestant Christian Church on the continent of Europe and the spread of the Reformation to England. An account of John Wesley and the influences which stemmed from his life, and ultimately brought into being The Methodist Church, should be familiar to Methodists. The early beginnings of Methodism in America, with its attendant movement to the frontiers of a new nation, certainly mark a phase of the life of our Church which should enable a member to appreciate the part Methodism has played in the development of our country.

3. *The Christian and His Beliefs*

Members coming into The Methodist Church should realize that Methodism has definite beliefs as a basis for carrying on its work. Many members have accepted these beliefs but have never crystallized them in definite order. The class sessions provide the minister an opportunity to point out just what it is that Methodism possesses as a means of stimulation in the execution of its work. Many feel a genuine sense of satisfaction in knowing, in a specific order, the beliefs which are a part of our Church.

Opportunity for Discussion

4. *The Christian and His Churchmanship*

This session provides an opportunity for discussing many things pertaining to the individual's personal church life. It is possible to discuss something pertaining to the mechanics whereby the church is operated. The final statement asked of new members, "Will you be loyal to The Methodist Church and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service?" provides a fine opportunity to stress

the sense of personal relationship and responsibility to the Church.

During the summer months we mark our calendar so that we will have a minimum of five blocks with four Sundays each when the membership classes are to be held. We then work constantly to secure new members for these classes. This provides a definite stimulation to all of us to keep in mind the need for the winning of new members to the church.

Our Commission on Membership and Evangelism is constantly at work interesting people in becoming members of our church and, in turn, informing them of the classes to be held. Setting aside Sundays throughout the year enables prospective members to attend any one of a number of sessions. It may be impossible for future members to attend certain class sessions because of conflict in schedule. They then know that, in a comparatively short time, a second series of classes will be under way and plan accordingly.

Reading Material

We have always held these meetings for new members on Sunday morning during the church school hour. In our case, the minister has always taught these sessions. We require all who come on confession of faith to be present. If, for some reason, it is impossible for them to attend at the Sunday school hour, we make available to them certain reading material which we feel will help them to be better church members. Experience leads us to believe that those who are assigned certain materials to read do so conscientiously. We also urge those who come by transfer to attend the sessions because we find that many who transfer have never had the opportunity of receiving instruction in church membership. Many times transfers say to us, "I thought I knew everything I needed to know about membership in The Methodist Church, but this series of discussions has been a source of genuine enlightenment to me."

Advantages

1. *It makes church membership important.* When a person unites with the Church, he enters into a spiritual relationship which should have attached to it an air of importance. It should be important to the individual who is uniting with the Church. It should also be important to the local church itself. If the Church establishes definite requirements of entrance into membership, the prospective members should be encouraged to rise to meet the challenge. As a consequence, uniting with the Church will stand out in their minds as a day that was highly significant. The burden of responsibility in this situation very definitely rests upon the local church and the minister.

2. *It makes church membership intelligent.* Certainly, no one would be so naïve as to suggest that, in four hourly sessions, one could cover all the material that should be covered in terms of church membership. Nevertheless, we must make some effort to acquaint people with the nature of our Church, its policies, its beliefs, and its anticipated program. We should do everything we can to provide information that will lead people into a richer and more meaningful experience within the life of the Church. These sessions can be a stimulus to that end. It is disturbing to people to enter into a discussion of their Church life only to be faced with the constant necessity of saying, "I don't know." We need to start them on the road to study and stimulate them to explore more fully the meaningful facets of the Christian life.

Definite Decision

3. *It aids those who are undecided to come to a definite decision with respect to church membership.* Not all people who come to the classes we conduct are committed to being members of our local church. Many of them are ex-

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IN THE HEART

by

Wilson O. Weldon

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$2.00 per 100

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by G. Ernest Thomas

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Headquarters for Evangelistic Materials
1908 Grand Avenue
Nashville 5, Tennessee

ploring the field of church relationship. They have certain questions in their minds and are seeking for answers. These classes enable them to find an approach to their problems. In many instances the classes lead them into church membership.

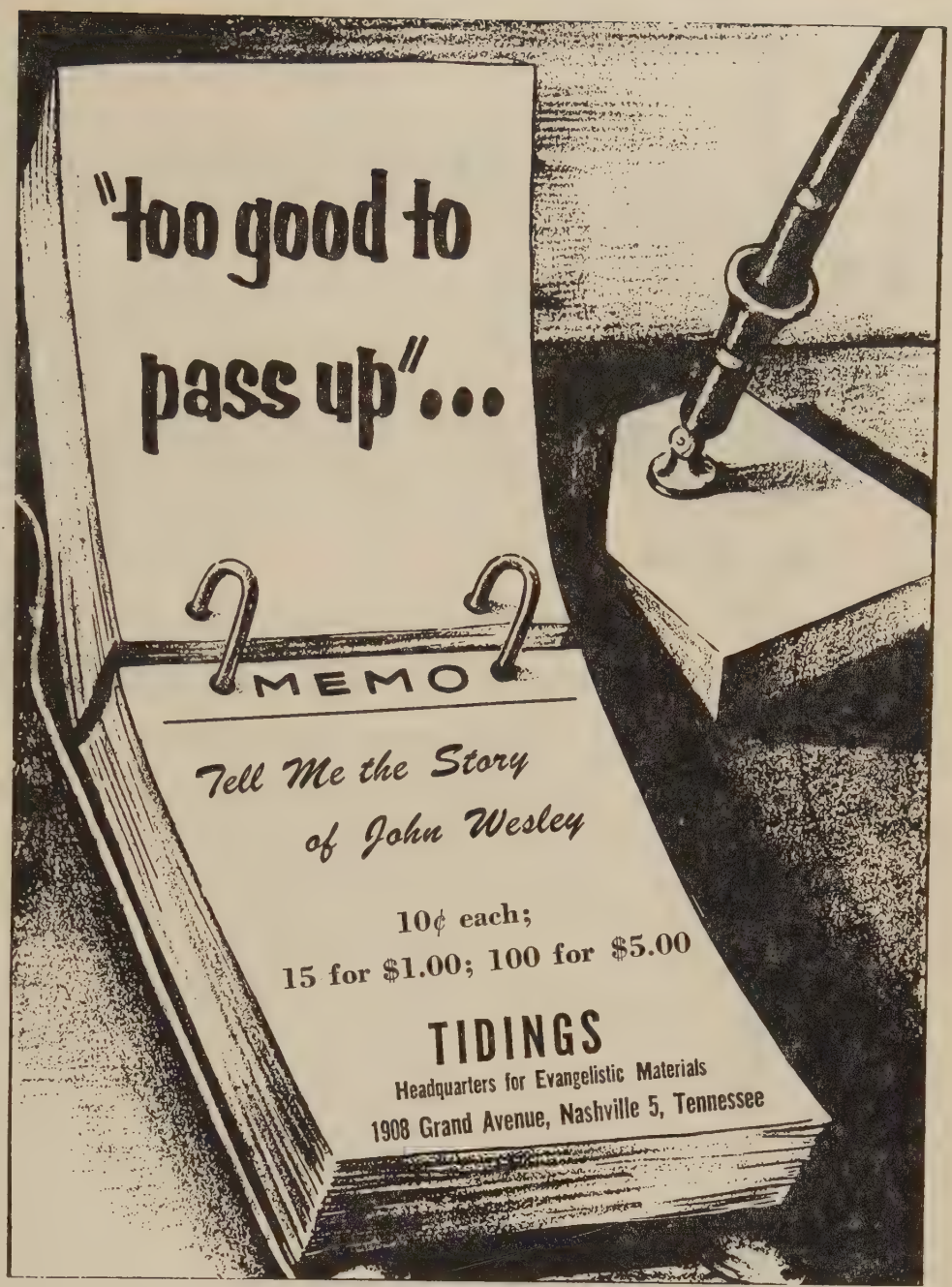
Sense of Urgency

4. *It tends to weed out those with a casual interest.* It is not always easy to determine just why members unite with the Church, but the majority of them are very sincere in their concern about their church relationship. There are others, however, who may have superficial interest. Lacking conviction, they tend to postpone their final commitment to the Church until such time as they feel a very definite sense of urgency with respect to the whole matter.

5. *It provides the pastor an opportunity to emphasize important matters.* Many ministers wish that they had the opportunity of talking to their members about their church life. It seems to us that this is one approach which provides an opportunity to emphasize the important phases of church life.

At this point, it is also possible for the minister to indicate his desire to discuss privately any personal problems which members of the class may have. This often leads to helpful discussions with the new members in private interviews.

6. *It gives the whole church a spiritual tone which makes it more effective.* People who have put forth an effort to unite with the Church, who feel that the Church really cares, who are conscious of the responsibilities which rest upon them as members make more effective their Church relationships than those who have had no occasion to discuss these matters. Each class develops an *esprit de corps* and that *esprit de corps,* carrying into the local church, tends to build a finer, more wholesome, and richer spirit within the total organization.


"too good to pass up"...
MEMO
Tell Me the Story of John Wesley
10¢ each;
15 for $1.00; 100 for $5.00
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Intelligent Membership

One day I visited a church. The assistant pastor told me that the minister of the church had had a very successful ministry, having taken new members into the church every Sunday since he became pastor. I asked him if the members were given any training before they were received into the fellowship of the church. "No," he said, "we have the people come to the altar of the church and give them the right hand of fellowship which signifies that they are members."

This has been, and I suppose will continue to be, a practice in many churches. It is my feeling that it is quite inadequate and not exactly fair to the new members. There should be a period of training before the right hand of fellowship is extended, for only in so doing can we build an intelligent and effective membership.

Today, when there are conflicting demands upon our people, it is highly important that we so impress the importance of the Church upon their minds that they will feel that the one agency which they must support with all their spiritual and material resources is the Christian Church.

Vital Institution

The Church is more than a club or a social organization. It is a vital institution, seeking to perpetuate the gospel of Jesus Christ in terms of human life. People who enter the Christian Church must be made aware of this fact through a period of membership training.

Some Suggestions for Observing

May 24, 1738

The Aldersgate Experience

May 24, 1955

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.

"I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart."

—John Wesley

1. A Week of Spiritual Enrichment Services (May 22-29)

(In the event you are not planning such services in the observance of Pentecost)

Plan special sermon for Aldersgate Sunday, May 22

2. Aldersgate Day, Tuesday, May 24, 1955:

Special service (probably at night) stressing:

THE MEANING OF ALDERSGATE

(1) A personal religious experience
(2) A wholesome emotion
(3) A night of destiny and commitment

An Aldersgate Day Program:

(1) Study groups—morning and afternoon—reviewing Wesley's experience
(2) Prayer groups—both cottage and church—to intercede for special evening service and to prepare participants for personal commitment
(3) Church open all day for meditation and prayer
(4) Aldersgate service at night—a prayer and consecration service rather than a preaching service:

Timed for Scripture reading at 8:45

(Or a reading from Wesley's *Journal* of the Aldersgate account)

Members of the prayer group might testify—in the nature of a "love feast"

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper might be administered

3. Youth Rallies or Aldersgate Assemblies:

On local church or sub-district level

Sponsored my MYF or Young Adult Fellowship

4. District Mass Meetings for Aldersgate:

Plan adequate advertising: radio, newspaper, TV, etc.

Use same general pattern as "Aldersgate Day Program"

Put *The Methodist Primer* in every home—also, *Tell Me the Story of John Wesley* (Both available from TIDINGS)

5. Visitation Evangelism for Aldersgate:

Unchurched visited in afternoon and evening prior to Aldersgate service with special invitation to attend

Telephone committees assigned lists for calling on the morning of the Aldersgate service to remind, to invite, and to urge individuals to attend

"THE *People* CALLED *Methodists*"

by Raymond E. Balcomb

Medford, Oregon

Pastor, First Methodist Church

PERHAPS the most distinctive belief of Methodism is *the idea of Christian perfection.* When John Wesley read Jesus' word recorded in Matthew, "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect," he did not try to forget it or to leave it out. He did not try to explain it away as a "counsel of perfection," intended only to remind us how sinful we are. Nor did he try to dull its edge with a lot of ritualistic *hocus-pocus* that would supposedly save us. He simply took it at its face value. Christ had said that we were to be perfect as our Father is perfect. Therefore, we were to bend all our energies in that attempt!

Anyone can see, of course, that there is a host of objections to such an idea. Perfect? No human being is ever perfect! We make mistakes in judgment. We know only in part. We all sin and come short of the glory of God.

In addition, the idea is subject to abuse. Some believe, for example, that sooner or later God makes us sinless. Since the lives of the believers fail to demonstrate their claim, however, most of the rest of us find it hard to take them seriously!

Wesley never fell into either these errors or abuses. He never claimed that he himself had become perfect. He was only "going on" to perfection. And what he understood perfection to mean was simply proper love. He held that we could—and should—become perfect in loving *only* those things we ought to love and in loving *all* of those things we ought to love. We will never know everything. We will always make mistakes in judgment, so that even when we mean to be doing good we may sometimes be doing harm. But we can become perfect in our intention to love as God loves. Wesley's idea of perfection was thus "purity of intention."

Early Methodist Societies met in chapels similar to the one shown above.

Insight Needed

Our times need this insight as much as did Wesley's. The purveyors of gloom and pessimism are on every hand. Fatalism is popular. There is much dark talk to the effect that we can't change human nature. Fight we always have, and fight we always will. Cheat we always have, and cheat we always will. Steal we always have, and steal we always will.

The Methodist answer to such a claim is something like the hillbilly's reply to the question whether he believed in infant baptism: "Believe in it? Man, I've seen it done!" We believe that men can change from viciousness to gentleness, from selfishness to generosity, from cruelty to kindness, from drunkenness to sobriety, in short, that their intentions can be purified, because we have seen it done! God calls every man to repent of his sins and set out on the path leading to Christian perfection. That is our most distinctive belief.

Greatest Danger

The second thing I want to mention, as we consider our tradition, *is the greatest danger facing Methodism.* Probably, the first thought that comes to some minds in these near-hysterical times is the danger of Communist infiltration. I am not much worried about that. No organization of any kind has more consistently opposed Communism than has The Methodist Church. Bishops, ministers, professors, and laymen in Methodism were speaking out against Communism when Senator McCarthy was clerking in a grocery store.

Perhaps someone else is thinking that our greatest danger is theological irregularity. According to some, "modernism" and "liberalism" are vitiating "the old time religion." I am not very worried about that, either. And the reason I am not is that Methodists have never had any standard creed or official theology.

Wesley held that theological distinctions were matters of opinion, and every believer was entitled to his own. In 1742 he wrote, "the distinguishing marks of a Methodist are not his opinions of any sort. His assenting to this or that scheme of religion, his embracing any particular set of notions . . . are all

quite wide of the point." And 46 years later he was still of the same mind. "The Methodists . . . do not insist on your holding this or that opinion; but they think and let think. Neither do they impose any particular mode of worship." And again, "I will not quarrel with you about my opinion; only see that your heart is right toward God, that you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ; that you love your neighbor, and walk as your Master walked, and I desire no more. . . . Give me solid, substantial religion; give me a humble, gentle lover of God and man; a man full of mercy and good faith, without partiality and without hypocrisy; a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love. Let my soul be with these Christians wheresoever they are, and whatsoever opinons they are of!"

Substituting Respectability

If our greatest danger is not Communist infiltration nor theological heresy, what is it? *It is the danger of substituting respectability for religion.*

Methodism arose among the outcastes of society. It is fast becoming a middle-upper class Church. Instead of being something dynamic and transforming, religion has tended to degenerate into a "decent formula wherewith to embellish a comfortable life." Well over half our membership comes from the middle and upper income brackets. The danger, as Wesley so keenly observed, is that the padded pew and the padded pocketbook replace the warmed heart. "I fear," he said, "that wherever wealth has increased, true religion has decreased in the same proportion."

Our Annual Conference reports are suggestive. Last year in Oregon we spent about $450,000 on buildings and improvements—an increase of $80,000 over the previous year. We gave $112,000 for World Service, an increase of $7,000. Our woman's societies raised $60,000—$8,000 more than the year before. All told, we raised almost two million dollars—an increase of about 10 per cent. Not bad. Not bad at all.

But what was our net gain in membership? 126! Forty-five thousand Methodists, in a state where only one-fourth of the people belong to any Church, won a new increase in lives committed to Christ of 126! In four out of five of the divisions in our church schools we showed a decrease in enrollment! We are in danger of making respectability our goal, "rich in things and poor in soul."

Sometime ago an advertisement appeared in a midwestern paper. It read, "I am thirty-eight years old. Would like to marry a woman of thirty who has a tractor. Please send me a picture of the tractor." Our greatest danger in Methodism is that we will think more of the tractor than we do of the person —and we won't think anything at all of the fellow who doesn't have a tractor!

Finally, as we think of the tradition of which we are a part, let me mention *Methodism's greatest contribution.* It is this: *a private morality that produces public reform.* "All historians of society are agreed that both the morals and the religion of England, in 1740, were in need of reform." "The evangelical revival which John Wesley launched and captained was a major event in English history, affecting every area of the nation's life—personal character, public morals, social ideals and practices, education and religion." It had "social effects which transformed England." "The Gospel of Christ," said Wesley, "knows of no religion but social."

"The Social Creed"

The rise of Methodism brought in its train prison reform and abolition of the slave trade. In a few years "the whole temper of English society" was changed. "The first fighters . . . for Unions, Co-ops, Societies, political freedom, and improved conditions" in England, "were Methodist preachers." Their personal morality had public results.

It has been the same in this country. The temperance movement, the co-operative movement, the movement for a positive and responsible participation in world affairs—all have been led by Methodism. The first Church to make a forthright declaration on social questions at a national convention was The Methodist Church. Since 1908 our *Discipline* has included what is known as "The Social Creed."

There is a devotional formula in Buddhism which is repeated millions of times every hour. It is repeated by people walking and sitting. It is engraved on stones to be read by travelers. It is lettered on prayer wheels turned by the wind and on others turned by water. Translated, it means, "O Jewel of the Lotus." It is intended to remind the poor and poverty stricken that they can rise above their surroundings, for the lotus thrives in the most unattractive surroundings. It grows out of mud and filth and so suggests that the spirit of man can rise from the lowliest and filthiest surroundings, that goodness can come out of misery and poverty, And so it can. But Buddhism and every other intensely individualistic system fails at the point where Christianity succeeds—its private morality does not produce public reform. It does nothing about the conditions of society, and it is now wavering before the challenge of militant Communism.

During the tense days of the great steel strike of 1919, a Methodist preacher was talking to a steel worker in a town near Pittsburgh. This minister was the chairman of a committee formed to investigate both sides of the dispute. He was seeking first-hand information. He asked the worker why he was striking. After a moment or two he got his answer. "A few months ago I buried my little daughter, six years old. As I stood by the grave, looking down at the casket, it suddenly occurred to me that I did not really know the girl at all. I worked on a 12-hour shift. I left home before she was up, and when I got back she had usually gone to bed. So I didn't know her. I am striking for the right to know my own child." When the committee's report was published, showing the physical, social and spiritual results of the 12-hour day, it was largely instrumental in arousing the conscience of the nation so that the 12-hour day was abolished. Methodism's private morality has produced public reform.

Historic Fires

Let me close with this. The rising waters behind one of the great dams in the Tennessee Valley were threatening to engulf an ancient log cabin. A new home had been built for the family on a location safely above the high water mark, but they had refused to move. Investigation disclosed that their reluctance was caused by the fire upon their hearth. "My grandpa built that fire a hundred years ago," the man explained. "He never let it go out, for he had no matches and it was a long trip to the neighbor's. When grandpa died, my pa tended the fire; and since he died, I've tended it; and none of us ever let it die. And I ain't a-goin' to move away and let grandpa's fire go out!"

The engineers brought a large iron kettle, gathered up the coals in the old fireplace and carried them to the new house, poured them out, and put on fresh kindling. So it was that the family moved from the shack in the valley to the new home on the hill and took with them the fire of their fathers!

God grant that we may find a way to take with us the historic fires of Methodism as we face the ever-changing problems and opportunities of our time!

—Adapted from an address delivered at Jacksonville, Oregon, in connection with the centennial of Southern Oregon Methodism.

Pastors!

Commissions on Membership and Evangelism!

IN *Your* CHURCH

Harmon

MAKE

Pentecost . . .

. . . A TIME FOR *Prayer*

. . . A TIME FOR *Preaching*

. . . A TIME FOR *Presenting Souls to God*

Some Suggestions for Observing Pentecost

I. Ascension Day (May 19) to Pentecost

Churches open daily for prayer and meditation

Cottage prayer meetings and study groups emphasizing the Holy Spirit

Downtown noonday services in cities and towns; special midweek services in rural charges

Every-member visitation to rekindle spiritual fervor

Fishermen's Clubs ought to take advantage of this period to win new persons

II. Pentecost Sunday, May 29, 1955

Plan baptisms for this day

("Whitsunday" is derived from the white garments worn by those to be baptized on Pentecost—"White-Sunday")

Make special preparation for this day: church decorations, mailing special notices, etc.

Have special service emphasizing:

1. The history and meaning of Pentecost (The word "Pentecost" means 50 and was used to designate the Jewish Festival of Weeks, 50 days after the Passover, when the fruits of harvest were presented)
2. Hymns and Scriptures exalting the Holy Spirit
3. An altar call and reception of new members (Pentecost is a logical Sunday to receive new members—on the first Pentecost 3,000 souls were added to the Church)

Give special attention to attendance for this day

Organize laymen to secure "an every-member attendance" on Pentecost Sunday

1. Use the "Fill the Pew Plan," available from TIDINGS at 3¢ each; minimum order, 25, for 3¢ rate
2. Have block captains contact persons in given areas in the interest of attendance
3. Designate laymen to give five-minute talks during the two services immediately prior to Pentecost Sunday to urge all members to attend

III. Hold a Week of Spiritual Enrichment Services

Themes suggested for these services:

May 22—"The Heart Strangely Warmed" (The Need for a Living Faith) (Pentecost prepares for the downpouring of the Spirit to inflame the heart)

May 23—"The Witness of the Spirit" (What God Can Do With a Man)

May 24—"Entrusted With the Gospel" (The Responsibilities of a Christian)

May 25—"What Now Will You Do With Jesus?" (A Time for Decision)

May 26—"To Serve the Present Age" (A Time for Consecration)

May 27—"A Changed World Through a Changed Heart" (The Challenge of a New Perspective)

May 29—"Today's Duties and Tomorrow's World" (Qualified for Service)

(NOTE: *These are simply suggested themes for pastors to develop in their own way.* TIDINGS *has no prepared materials on this series because the editors believe that every minister will want to plan and develop his own emphasis for this week.*)

Pentecost

SEASON OF

JOY!
ZEAL!
VICTORY!
REVIVAL!
ENTHUSIASM!

Pentecost Sunday can be made to climax 50 golden days of evangelism between Easter and Pentecost. We have the same God, the same living Christ, and the same Holy Spirit that the early Christians had. If pastors of churches will do as the disciples did on the first Pentecost, a great spiritual awakening will come throughout the Church. What did these early disciples do?

First of all, these early disciples walked with Christ. They realized they were to witness for Him. Witnessing for Him was one of the prerequisites of being a disciple. These early Christians met for prayer. They met not just once, but they met over and over again.

They had fellowship one with another and they prayed until they were all of one accord. They were sincere in wanting God's will to be done and His Kingdom to come. They were sincere in giving themselves completely to Christ and His Kingdom. They were sincere in that they wanted the Holy Spirit whom Christ had promised them. They were obedient to Christ. So they were willing to "tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high."

Here is the secret of salvation. For "this is the victory that overcometh the world." Only thus can we meet the conditions for the Holy Spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to take complete possession of our lives.

If we of the Church will do this today, we shall bring to the world another Pentecost.

Remembering what happened to the first Christians at Pentecost, and in the search for the spiritual power turned loose there, present-day Christians would do well to examine their own souls to see how effectively and persistently they are telling the story of Jesus Christ. Peter spoke with conviction and authority to the surprised multitude that had assembled. Today's throngs are equally surprised—and inspired—when Christians with a spiritual experience begin telling what they know.

The spiritually minded Christian who spends his whole life in one locality and one church is the person who can be depended upon to do the most effective witnessing. He is known to many, even as Peter was. His new and overwhelming experience means much to those who know how he has been living. He becomes the personification of spiritual power turned loose in the world.

The New Testament records the works of Peter, but tells us little about the other Christian pioneers. There are many anonymous Christians who told this story of Christian Faith. They experienced the real presence of the Risen Lord and went about proclaiming that He is Lord indeed.

That is the real function of religious experience now and in every age. It is spiritual power turned loose for the salvation of men.

—Methodist Church Bulletin Service for a former year

The Lost Emphasis

by
Lloyd Ellis Foster
Newark, New Jersey

An Illuminating Dicussion of the Holy Spirit

There is something tragic about a person who is a victim of amnesia. The lamp of memory burns dimly in his mind. The darkness of confusion envelops him. He becomes a sort of floating human atom, drifting along unfriendly streets. He knows neither his name nor his family. He is severed from all the important human relationships he has known.

But Christian doctrines and teachings also get lost. There are notable cases of theological amnesia. Christian truths can become so obscured by neglect that they lose significance in the thinking of the average Christian. In this message, therefore, I want us to rediscover a neglected Christian teaching. It is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Together let us explore the theme: "The Lost Emphasis." For many Christians, the New Testament teaching of the Holy Spirit is indeed a forgotten emphasis.

In Acts 19 we are told of Paul's visit to Ephesus. There he found a group of twelve disciples who eagerly awaited his teaching. Paul said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They said, "No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." I suspect that if the same question were asked many modern Christians, the same answer would have to be given. Among many Christians today there is either complete ignorance as to the meaning of the Holy Spirit, or there is such vagueness of understanding that the average Christian receives little or no practical help in daily living from this structural doctrine of Christianity.

What is the Christian teaching about the Holy Spirit? The term "Holy Spirit" combines two words which are difficult both to understand and to define. The word "holy" is the more familiar. It refers to something which has been set aside for sacred use. There are certain objects in our Christian tradition which we believe to be holy. The Bible, for instance, is holy. It is set apart from other books because it deals in a unique fashion with great themes—God, Man, Destiny. No sensitive Christian would treat the Bible lightly or with disdain.

A Life Principle

On the other hand, the word "spirit" is almost too elusive in its meaning to imprison in words. Suppose you were asked to write on a piece of paper your interpretation of the word "spirit." Probably it would only be after considerable groping and intellectual effort that you would be able to write anything. At least that is my experience. "Spirit" may be defined as an invisible life principle. It means literally "to breathe into." When we turn to the Bible, we find many references in the Old Testament to the coming of the Spirit upon men and women, particularly the prophets. The latter were able to declare the moral judgments of the Lord with timeliness and boldness because God breathed into them His thoughts. In the New Testament, the term "Holy Spirit" is used in connection with the empowerment of individual believers. The early Christians, upon whom the Holy Spirit fell at Pentecost, believed confidently that they were undergirded and empowered in a special way to undertake incredible tasks. Christians were able to do unbelievable things because they were ordinary people plus the Holy Spirit.

There seem to be two structural ideas implied in the New Testament reference to the Holy Spirit. The first is that God is a universal Presence. Now among primitive religions, men and women believed that the Deity was localized in a tree or a bush or a stone. One sees at once the tremendous disadvantage in such a conception of the Divine Being. God was tethered to a particular object. In an emergency He could not be summoned. But in the New Testament, there is put forth the idea of God, the Holy Spirit, as a universal Presence. He is available to us as individuals at any time. But He is equally available to men and women in China, in Africa, and in Europe. The Holy Spirit is available anywhere and at any time. God, the Holy Spirit, is a universal Presence.

The second idea implied in the New Testament teaching of the "Holy Spirit" is that God is transforming power. God, as Spirit, penetrating into the innermost part of personality, is able to transform men and women and to remake them into His likeness. The dynamic thrust of Christianity in the first century was because of this amazing power of God to change the lives of people.

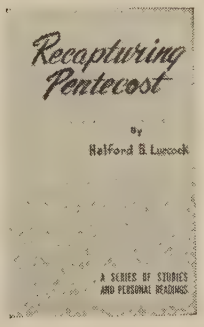
Of course the teaching of the Holy Spirit brings to our attention a basic Christian concept, the Trinity. When we try to explain the Trinity, we find ourselves on difficult ground. But in Christian usage, the Trinity refers to "one" God who has expressed Himself

Helpful Materials for

Your Easter to Pentecost Program of Evangelism

RECAPTURING PENTECOST

by Halford E. Luccock



A 48-page volume containing a series of studies for use by local churches and in personal reading to rekindle the Pentecostal fires in individual hearts. May be effectively used in midweek services in preparing the congregation for a significant observance of Pentecost.

15c each; 10 or more, 10c each

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

by Edwin Lewis

A helpful interpretation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as it relates to contemporary experience.

50c each; 12 or more, 35c each

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A beautiful 2-color tract containing the Revised Standard Version of the scriptural story of Pentecost. Excellent to give to every member.

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Headquarters for Evangelistic Materials

1908 Grand Avenue
Nashville 5, Tennessee

in three manifestations: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The simplest human analogy which I have been able to grasp is that of a man who sustains a threefold relationship. Here is a particular man who has a threefold human relationship: to his mother he is a son; to his wife he is a husband; to his children he is a father. Now this man does not represent three separate persons, but one person with a threefold relationship. In some such manner as that, but much more profoundly, God has manifested Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We find Jesus very explicit in His teaching about the Holy Spirit. He kept telling His disciples that it was necessary for Him to leave the earth that the Holy Spirit might come. One sees at once the necessity, because Jesus in the flesh was a localized person. He could be in Bethlehem, but He could not be in Bethlehem and Jerusalem at the same time. He said to His followers: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Again, before His ascension He made this direct and profoundly significant promise to His followers: "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." We know that shortly thereafter Pentecost occurred with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon believing men and women in such measure that they "turned the world upside down."

Paul also deals explicitly with this Christian teaching of the Holy Spirit. He taught that the believer who receives God as Holy Spirit may find reproduced within himself the qualities and characteristics that marked Jesus Christ, so that he becomes gentle, loving, bold, and faithful. "No man," declared Paul, "can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." He also points out that it is the Holy Spirit who gives the believer the inner certainty that he is a Christian. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

Can We Repeat Pentecost?

Now as you look at our modern world, its conflict, its inability to resolve its problems, the growing fear of the future, do you not agree that there is a tremendous need of another Pentecost, a visitation of the power of God in the lives of men and in the affairs of the nations? But can Pentecost be reproduced? Can there come in our time a moral and spiritual awakening so great that it will change the attitudes of individuals and of society so that we shall be able to establish a just and enduring

peace? The first Pentecost was marked by the outpouring of the Spirit of God, and by the release of spiritual and moral energies that changed the condition of men and of society. Is it possible to reproduce Pentecost in our time?

Within the last decade, we have witnessed the most significant happening that has occurred in the realm of science —the release of atomic energy. We have found the key with which to unlock the seething, invisible electrical forces that are inherent in matter. Men and women like ourselves have not yet grasped the profound importance of the release of atomic energy in the realm of matter. We are still vague in our understanding of this miracle, but we know that something very unusual has taken place and that from now on there will be an increasing use of atomic energy in performing the tasks of production and distribution in modern life. But just as atomic energy represents the release of hidden forces in the physical world, so Pentecost represents the release of hidden invisible forces in the realm of personality.

I believe with increasing conviction that we can repeat Pentecost if we will meet the conditions that were met at the first Pentecost. Those conditions are indicated in the Book of Acts: "They devoted themselves to the instruction given by the apostles, and to fellowship, breaking bread, and praying together." If we will give ourselves to Christian teaching, and the understanding of great structural doctrines of Christianity; if we will give ourselves to fellowship, planning together, working together, witnessing for Christ; if we will give ourselves to the solemn and sincere reception of the bread and the wine, recognizing therein the meaning of the death of Jesus Christ; and if we will give ourselves to praying together with great belief and expectancy—we shall have in the life of the Church today another Pentecost.

Practical Benefits to Us

Lastly, consider the practical helpfulness of the Holy Spirit in our lives as Christian believers and workers. As an individual Christian you will find your mind stimulated, your Christian living enriched and deepened, and you will have the spiritual power that you want, if you will grasp the Christian teaching of the Holy Spirit and will rely on Him in your daily living.

Jesus said, "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." Therefore, in our private devotions, in our services of worship, in the reading of the scriptures, and in great moral decisions, we Christians need this concept that the Holy Spirit (God as a universal Presence) is in our minds, unfolding Christian truth to us, guiding and leading us into new provinces of understanding and of helpfulness.

Said Jesus, "I will ask the Father to give you another helper to be with you forever." That's what the Holy Spirit really is. He is another helper; He is the only adequate helper, because He is God as Spirit indwelling in our lives, helping us at every point and on every occasion. You cannot go anywhere where God, the Spirit, is not. You may go into the deepest mine, or you may climb to the sky by airplane, but God is there.

He is our helper; in every testing situation, He stands by. Those who are ill and feel the torture of pain and those who have felt the stab of sorrow will find courage and comfort in the ministering helpfulness of the Holy Spirit.

Let us recover the lost emphasis of Christianity!

"GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY"

"GOD'S TEN MOST WANTED PERSONS"

$2.00 per 100

An inspirational folder containing suggestions for effective intercessory prayer and space for a personal prayer list.

"A PRAYER GUIDE FOR LAY GROUPS"

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A helpful booklet containing practical suggestions for prayer groups and cells.

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(Compiled)

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An excellent guide to a richer prayer experience.

TIDINGS

Headquarters for Evangelistic Materials

1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 5, Tennessee

Extending the Word

IN THE WEST INDIES

(Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico)

by Betty Thompson

THE palm arbor under which the Methodist service was being held was decorated with small bits of colored paper. The crowd of Haitians sat attentively, the men in stiffly starched khaki or white duck and the women in brightly printed calico.

"God be with you all," each of the speakers began as they told their stories of what Christ had meant to them. And after the testimonials came the readers.

A fourteen-year-old Haitian boy who had never been to school until a few months before was called forward by the Rev. Ormonde McConnell, Irishman, who directs the successful British Methodist program in Haiti.

The minister handed him the gospel of Luke in Creole and asked the boy to read. He turned to Luke 10 and read aloud with quiet dignity, stumbling over a few words.

And to be sure he understood what he read Mr. McConnell questioned him:

"What does that mean? How can you love God with all your heart?"

"Follow Him right to the end," the boy replied in Creole.

"Not a bad answer," Mr. McConnell told the group of 18 Methodist leaders from the United States after translating the remark.

In their first visit to a church service in the West Indies the tour sponsored by the Board of Missions' Division of National Missions and Joint Section of Education and Cultivation saw something they would witness elsewhere in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico: the thirst for knowledge and the desire for good Christian literature of the evangelical convert.

The American Bible Society has distributed 100,000 copies of the Gospel in Creole in Haiti. For many years French has been the official language of the Republic but Creole, a combination of French and African, is universally spoken.

"We prepared a simple phonetic orthography for Creole and adopted the Laubach method to Creole," says Mr. McConnell, explaining that from 85 to 95 per cent of the population are illiterate. All teaching in the schools is in French while Creole, modified French vocabulary with African grammar, is really the language of Haiti.

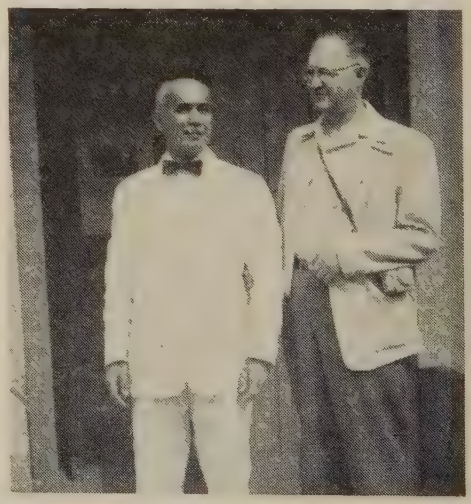
"We have been instrumental in preparing literature in Creole for the new adult literates, estimated at 40,000. Luke and Acts translations made by us have been printed by the American Bible Society," Mr. McConnell says.

The literacy campaign has been taken over by the Haitian Government and UNESCO. Another educational emphasis of the Methodist mission in Haiti is day schools. At present there are plans whereby the Division of World Missions of the Methodist Board of Missions will join British Methodists, Swiss Methodists, and American Baptists in conducting a Protestant day school for children of all ages.

The population of Haiti is estimated at slightly over four million. The Dominican Republic which occupies the

Brush arbor meeting in Haiti conducted by Rev. Ormonde McConnell, British Methodist missionary. All of the Haitians walked to attend the meeting, many taking several hours.

Rev. Rico Soltero, superintendent of the Puerto Rico Mission, with Rev. Walter J. Leppert, of the Board of Missions.



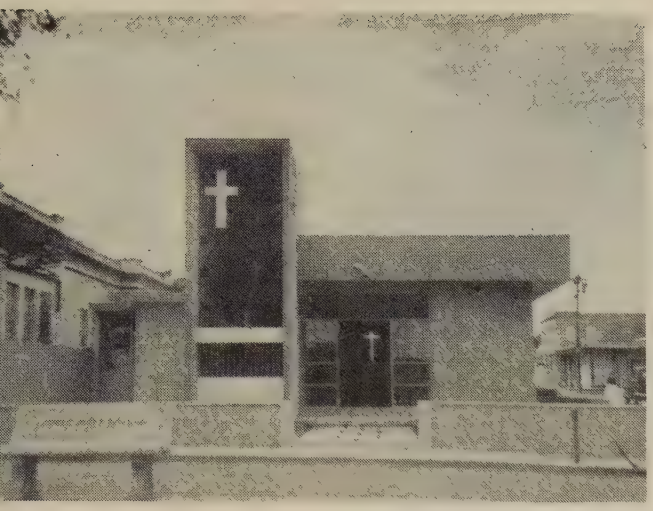
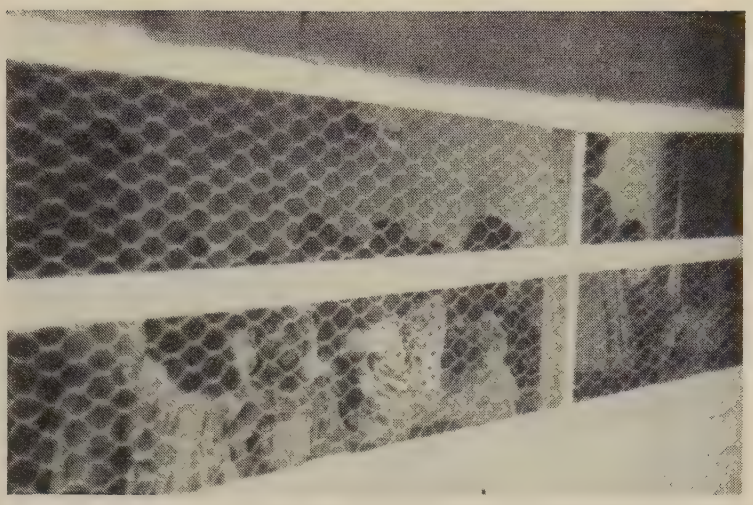


Photo by Betty Thompson

New Methodist Church on island of Vieques of which Rev. Rod Barr is pastor.



A crowded Puerto Rican Sunday school class of boys and girls in a room which was formerly a chicken coop. The picture gives an idea of the crowded condition of the church and Sunday school. Other classes met outdoors.

other two-thirds of the island of Hispanola has something over two million people. Here, too, despite great growth in public education, there is need for "evangelical" or Protestant day schools.

Methodists cooperate with the Presbyterians and United Brethren in the Board for Christian Work in Santo Domingo. Here the Dominican Evangelical Church has 16 organized churches, 25 paid workers (all Dominicans except the superintendent of nursing education at mission-sponsored Hospital Internacional, Miss Mildred Lamberts, and the superintendent of the evangelical work, the Rev. Maurice Daily, former Methodist missionary in Cuba), and 90 preaching places. Many lay preachers assist the work of the Dominican Evangelical Church. THE UPPER ROOM in Spanish is widely used.

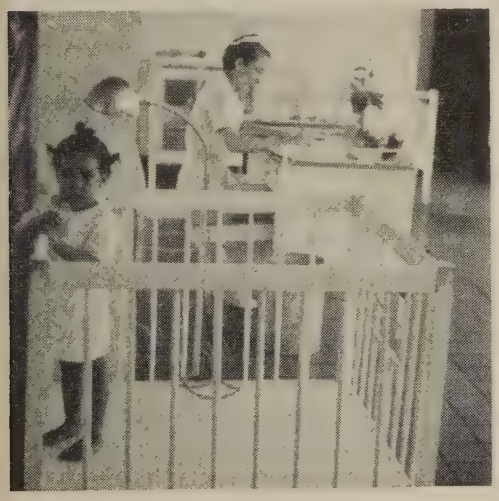
The Liberia Dominicana (the Dominican Bookstore) has played a leading part in the literary campaign with a teacher-training program in the Laubach method. Included in this program are nurses at the Hospital Internacional who have taught patients how to read as they convalesce. The Liberia Dominicana, managed by Julio Postigo, is a paying concern which turns back to the mission several thousand dollars annually from the sales of Christian and secular literature. It is considered the outstanding bookstore in the Republic and has been designated so in newspaper polls. It is the main distribution center for "El Aposento Alto" (THE UPPER ROOM).

In Puerto Rico again the Methodist visitors saw people desiring to learn at a faster rate than the government can provide schools. It is said that even with all schools operating double sessions thousands of Puerto Rican children have no opportunity for education. The Woman's Division of Christian Service through its George O. Robinson School has sixteen day schools operated in Methodist churches across the island. In their visit to Vieques Island the Methodists from the States heard from missionary Earl R. (Rod) Barr inspiring stories of adults who study after work so they can learn to read and write for the first time.

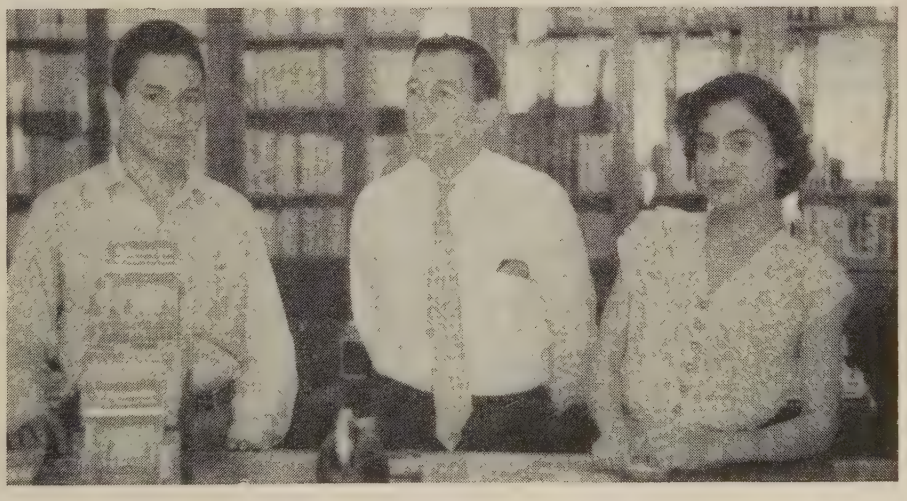
The wiping out of old slums and replacing them with new housing projects has created a demand for new churches in urban areas. In San Juan the new Puerto Nuevo church serves in what has been called the world's largest private housing project. This church which was started in a garage now is housed in a building provided by *Week of Dedication* funds and has a thriving day school supported by Robinson. At San Jose in Rio Piedras a housing project for 6,000 families is being built to take care of many who formerly lived in El Fanguito, in the shack slums built over

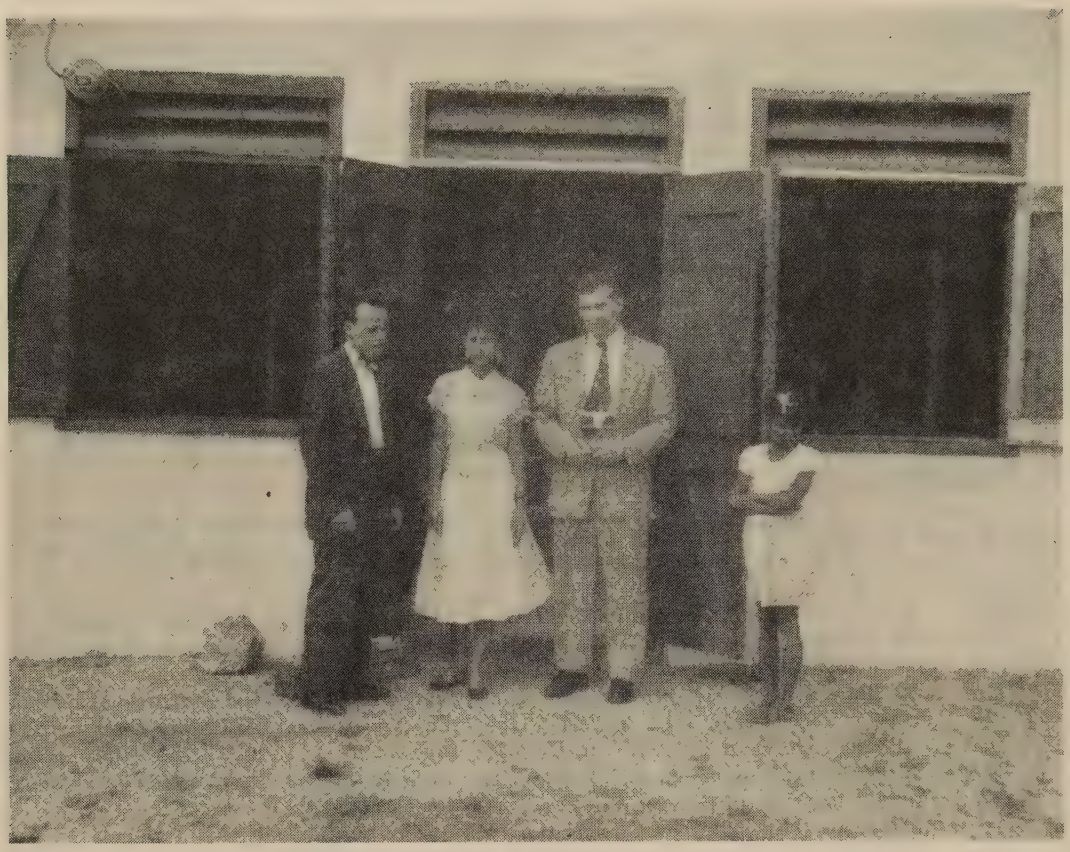
(*Continued on next page*)

Children's ward at Hospital Internacional, Ciudad Trujillo, Dominican Republic.



Mr. J. D. Postigo, (center) manager of the Liberia Dominicana, Ciudad Trujillo, with his assistants, Mr. Marcelo Santura and Mrs. Elba Estrella de Tejada. Copies of *El Aposento Alto (The Upper Room)* are shown in the racks.





Rev. Rod Barr with the head of the young people's work, the assistant pastor, and a child standing in front of the church at Esperanza on the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico. This island has been used by the United States Navy for experimental purposes. At present there are no hospital facilities though the mission operates a small clinic. Mr. Barr operates a plane, flying patients back and forth to the hospital in San Juan.

water which have long been Puerto Rico's disgrace. Here, there is a new church which meets in a house. This congregation is badly in need of a building.

Another young church in the San Juan area, Buenos Aires, is located on the edge of that not-yet cleared slum, El Fanguito, in the midst of thousands of people in need of the gospel. Missionary Richard Johnson says that faithful laymen have conducted a fine program to reach and evangelize children, youth, and adults in an area where spiritual needs surpass even the great economic needs. A converted dwelling house serves here with a two-room annex for Sunday school work.

One of the longer established churches at Barrio Obrero, a section in the San Juan area, has as pastor the Rev. Diego Escobar, a former Catholic priest. Here several hundred people came to hear UPPER ROOM editor, Dr. J. Manning Potts on the Sunday evening that American visitors occupied Puerto Rican pulpits. This thriving church is an example of what an energetic pastor with a good building can do in an area where there are many people. In overpopulated Puerto Rico, even in remote rural areas there are always many people to be reached.

The Methodist leaders from the United States who made the January visit to Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico were the following:

Two Conference missionary secretaries, the Rev. Walter M. Lockett, Jr., pastor of the Harrisonburg, Virginia, Methodist Church, and the Rev. Horace McSwain, Western North Carolina Conference secretary, Statesville, North Carolina, and district missionary secretaries, the Rev. (and Mrs.) Frank Morehead, First Methodist Church, LaGrange, Georgia, the Rev. Edward E. Hamilton, First Methodist Church, Lovington, New Mexico, and the Rev. William E. Asher, Trinity Methodist Church, Cape Charles, Virginia, were members of the group. Others were: the Rev. James Roy Smith, First Methodist Church, Hopewell, Virginia; the Rev. R. H. Forrester, the Methodist Church, Front Royal, Virginia; Dr. J. Manning Potts, editor, THE UPPER ROOM, Nashville, Tennessee; Mr. Robert Mayfield, Chicago, Illinois, executive secretary of the Board of Lay Activities; Mr. and Mrs. Frank West, St. Petersburg, Florida; the Rev. Edwin Tewksbury, Interboard Committee on Missionary Education, Nashville, Tennessee. From the Division of National Missions were Dr. W. Vernon Middleton, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, executive secretary of church extension who served as guide; the Rev. Charles Golden, New York, New York; and the Rev. J. B. Harris, Jr., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Rev. Walter J. Leppert, tour leader, and Miss Betty Thompson of the Board of Mission's Section of Education and Cultivation were in the party.

Word from a Warden

Dear Sir,

We have been using THE UPPER ROOM for some time and feel that it is the best of all daily devotionals. We use great volumes of religious literature and find that THE UPPER ROOM is always in demand. We try to maintain a sufficient amount on hand so that they will be available at all times.

Prayer meetings and Bible-study classes are conducted nightly at the white and Negro camps. We feel that your publication is a great contributing factor in the change of atmosphere and attitudes here. Of course, we recognize the grace of God in the improvements and are grateful.

Again, I wish to thank you and compliment you for such an excellent composition as THE UPPER ROOM.

Very sincerely,

A Warden

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS FOR GOD

by Arnold Prater
Pastor
Corder, Missouri

GOD is always more willing to give than we are to receive. The church that is soaked, saturated, bathed, and bound together in *direct communion* with God is the church that is witnessing miracles every week.

If your church is lethargic, dragging its feet, indifferent to the great challenges of the general spiritual programs of Methodism, if attendance is declining and the fires are going out, I think the reason is obvious: *someone* lacks sufficient faith in the power of prayer.

Word of Testimony

Let me give a humble word of testimony as to what God has wrought in our little conservative German community where folks are more "bashful" and "backward" than usual about such things as praying together.

We began our attendance crusade last year with a twenty-four hour prayer meeting. Twenty-four couples went to the sanctuary—one couple per hour. As they entered, they were alone in the church. Candles were burning at the altar. There was an open Bible in the sanctuary. Along with it the pastor provided an instruction sheet on how to spend the hour. Couples were encouraged to pray aloud.

Four steps were recommended for the prayer vigil. The first step included prayer, giving thanks and expressing adoration to God. This led naturally to the confessing of specific sins and to giving thanks for the enumerated good qualities of the partner.

The second step consisted of prayer for the church, the minister, the attendance crusade, the visitation evangelism program, and the Lenten spiritual life mission.

The third step consisted of praying for the indifferent members. A list of these members was provided.

The final step included prayer for our servicemen (by name) and our prospect list of the lost. There was also provided a list of people who needed to transfer their membership.

For the concluding act, the partners knelt, placed their arms about each other, and poured out whatever was on their hearts. They closed their vigil by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

What happened? Only God knows *all* the results, which are *still* occurring. People testified to me that it was the shortest hour they had ever spent. Husbands and wives were drawn closer together. One couple began the practice of daily family worship. The very next Sunday another couple who had not been in church for two years (their names were on the prayer list) were in church. The woman called me at lunchtime and tearfully confessed her indifference and her resolve to change. Attendance increased thirty per cent during the spring. *Ninety-two per cent* of our families pledged to have daily family worship consisting of Bible reading and prayer.

What happened financially? Two years ago our total budget was $2,900. Last year it was $9,300. This year the pastor's salary was doubled over that paid in 1952. This was in spite of the fact that there had been a devastating drouth and that seventy-five per cent of our people are farmers.

Is it any wonder that this "Twenty-Four Hours For God" has become an annual affair? Is it any wonder we are enthusiastically entering into the project of forming *our entire church* into prayer cells of four per group? Is it any wonder *we believe* in the power of prayer?

It can happen to you, too. "And greater things than these" can you do! For God has very tangible blessings, undreamed of, all prepared for the minister and people who are willing to give Him permission to bestow them.

Finally, let me give a word of personal testimony. During the past war I was flying in a bomber over Germany. The experience was one of horror. One day, in 1944, our plane was badly shot up, and we had a terrifying experience as we tried to steer the crippled plane to neutral Sweden. But we made it and, miraculously, landed.

Power of Prayer

After landing, I took out my pocket Testament and opened it. I turned to the passage which described Peter walking on the water. Suddenly he began to sink. But the Lord reached out His hand and drew him up. Then He spoke, "O thou of little faith . . . wherefore didst thou doubt?"

I wonder if those words might apply to those who have been hesitant to explore the *power* of prayer?

Young People Visit Adults About Delinquency

by J. Frank Graham

Pastor, Edmond, Oklahoma

These high school young people of First Methodist Church, Edmond, Oklahoma, visit adults under the direction of J. Frank Graham, pastor, and Mr. and Mrs. Ed Lutz, sponsors.

College young people, under the direction of Jack Young, assistant pastor, visit adults.

A NEW experience is being realized among the youth of the First Methodist Church in Edmond, Oklahoma. What began as a venture behind the iron curtain of adult indifference turned out to be an awakening experience in which many have shared.

It all started last summer when the activities of the church were at their lowest ebb. Coming back from various camps, the young people were enthusiastic and wanted to do something extraordinary. In discussing several projects, they decided that visitation evangelism seemed to be the most challenging. At that time, all our newspapers, radios, and television stations were giving publicity to juvenile delinquency. Therefore, delinquency became the topic of discussion at every MYF meeting.

The young people were worried about the extent of the delinquency, but they were also aware of the adult indifference and decided to do something about it. They voted unanimously to set aside each Thursday night for systematic visitation in the homes of the adults. Cards bearing witness to their purpose were printed for them to carry into the homes.

These young people—26 high school students and 16 college students—come to the church on Thursday evenings at 7:00 o'clock for a short devotion and instruction. A candle is assigned to each team. The team kneels before the candle and prays, then lights it, and goes out on its visitation. After the visitation the team comes back to the church, kneels before the candle and prays, blows out the candle, and leaves quietly from the church. Cards containing information concerning the visits are left on the altar. The pastor takes this information and makes whatever follow-up calls should be made.

This visitation has done more to awaken the adults than any visitation we have ever done. Some adults who were not active nevertheless agreed to transportation. As a result, they became interested and are now active in the work. Church school attendance has increased 25 per cent, and the church attendance, at both morning and evening services, has increased at least that much.

The value of the visitation to the youth themselves is inspiring to any one who observes their enthusiasm and sincerity. The young people even go into business houses and leave the cards, creating much interest and favorable comment. The church has been revolutionized, and the pastor himself has been helped very much.

My Visitation Campaigns

by W. A. Swift
Monteagle, Tennessee

WHEN I was received into the Annual Conference, Bishop O. P. Fitzgerald asked me if I would "visit from house to house." I did not do this visiting because my conscience would condemn me, but because I felt it was my duty to do so. It was my plan and purpose, when I went to a charge, to begin a systematic house-to-house visiting campaign. I usually set aside the mornings for study and other responsibilities, and put in the afternoons visiting.

From my own experience, I believe that a minister can do more good at this than he can do by preaching from the pulpit. I would plan not to miss a home. If in town, I would visit by city blocks. I tried to cover my territory every three months. If I saw people were busy in the home—and one can usually tell—I passed up that home for the time being.

When I got into the home, after a few words about the family, I would begin my mission—inquiring about the spiritual life of the family, who were in Sunday school, who were Christians, etc. My first question, as a rule, was to ask who were Christians because I found some church members were not Christians. To those who said they were not Christians, I explained how to become a Christian.

To very young people, I told how, as a boy, I became a Christian. If parents were not Christians, I usually made my appeal to the young people of the home first. That way the parents would get the benefit of my message, and as a rule, would surrender their lives to Christ if the children did. The Bible says, "And a child shall lead them." Then my next effort would be to get them to join the church. This kind of work was about the most enjoyable part of my ministry. From such work I saw as many as 30 persons, old and young, join the church the following Sunday.

I recall that one Saturday afternoon I visited 67 persons to get them to come to Sunday school. They did not go to Sunday school anywhere. The next morning—Sunday—I had 17 of that number in my Sunday school.

I also had visitation campaigns wherein I enlisted my church members, old and young, in the calling.

In a revival meeting, after a service, a young schoolteacher invited me to her house to ask me what it meant to be a Christian. She had been a church member since early childhood. With tears in her eyes, she said, "Is it possible that I have never known the reality of being a Christian?" Then we knelt in prayer, and there she found the joy of salvation. That was 50 years ago. She still has the joy that comes from knowing the reality of the saving power of Christ.

Personal evangelism and mass evangelism constitute the Christian way—the way Christ worked. He preached to the multitude and to the individual. He preached to the woman at the well and to Zaccheus up in a tree. Peter was led to Christ by the personal evangelism of his brother, and it was Peter who preached to the throng of thousands on the day of Pentecost when thousands were converted.

I went to a certain town as pastor but did not announce the time I would arrive. At the railroad station there was only one man in addition to the railroad agent. The man was a man of means and standing in the community, but he was a drunkard. However, he was sober when I met him. I shook hands with him and walked up town with him. His brother, not a Christian, was one of the wealthiest men in all the country. As soon as we parted, the drunkard hunted up his wealthy brother and said: "I met the new pastor. He is a kind man. I like him." In an hour or so, the wealthy brother came to see me and invited me to go with him to his house, which I did.

Before leaving, I asked that we pray. I prayed that he might become a Christian. I started a revival meeting at my church immediately. This man was on the back seat the first night. At the close of the service, I asked him to yield to Christ. On the third night, he was happily converted. That night a revival broke out—possibly the greatest revival that town ever experienced. Many school-teachers and businessmen were converted. Later on, the drunkard whom I had met at the station was converted and became a steward in the church.

This great revival started through a kind, personal conversation with a drunkard. Evangelism has a broad field—preaching, teaching, living Godly lives, speaking kind words, doing kind deeds, practicing charity. The gospel of Christ can be preached to the world in many ways.

Some DO'S and DON'T'S for VISITORS

Do's . . .

Be friendly. Be natural. Smile. Give a hearty handshake
Show a genuine interest in the family
Maintain a positive attitude always
Assume that the family is interested in the church
Be a good listener. Allow the persons to talk. They may have something to get off their chest
Talk enthusiastically about the church and its program
Set a good example of regular church attendance
Talk about reasons for regular church attendance

Don't's . . .

Don't criticize
Don't ask questions that may antagonize (Why haven't we seen you in church? Why aren't you interested? Why aren't the children in Sunday school?)
Don't ask questions about the family's personal affairs
Don't gossip
Don't argue
Don't rush the visit

The Local Church

AN INTERPRETATION

by

Bishop Costen J. Harrell

Charlotte Area

THE source of the whole Church's life and strength stems from the local church. No idea or endeavor in the Church becomes effective until it reaches the "grass roots."

Emphasis on Local Church

The Methodist Church designated the present quadrennium as a period for strengthening and enriching the life of the local church. The official board and the four new commissions—Membership and Evangelism, Education, Missions, and Finance—authorized by the 1952 General Conference, have been integrated into the life of the whole Church in an amazingly brief time and in a most commendable way. Now the basic organization of every Methodist church is the same, and this is a great gain.

The Methodist *Discipline* makes clear that the official board is the administrative body, having supervision of every local church in cooperation with the pastor.

The four commissions, supervised by the board, lead in the activities that every church must undertake, if it is true to its nature and mission. Of these our *Discipline* speaks explicitly:

"Four phases of activity are essential to the spiritual life and ministry of every local church: evangelism, missions, education, and finance. No local church, however small, is adequately and effectively organized unless definite provision is made for continuous participation in these four major concerns of the Church Universal."

Two words of caution need to be spoken. First, the mere naming of the commissions does not make a church an effective unit. They are only channels through which the spiritual energies of a congregation may move. Second, the distinction between what is fundamental and essential in the church's ministry and the work which is undertaken to meet a particular need or situation must be preserved. The commissions carry forward the work that is essential. Committees, which may be increased without limit, are named to carry forward all other tasks.

The organization of the local church is designed to give large place to the laity. This is not a new idea. John Wesley made large use of laymen, so much so that Methodism may be called a lay movement.

But the idea persists that the work of the Church is the preacher's business. Ministers are called to instruct and inspire and lead, but the Church's greatest strength lies in the great body of her laymen and women.

The whole structure of the local church's board, commissions, and committees is designed to harness the energies of our laymen for service to God and man.

New Structure

The local church's new structure also opens channels through which every congregation may be in direct contact with the General Agencies that serve the whole Church. By this means every congregation may feel itself to be a vital part of the whole Church, whose manifold ministries reach every quarter of the globe. Now direct communication is established. Every local church may feel the throb of the engines. The smallest may experience the thrill of the great adventure to make disciples of all nations.

(Excerpts from an address by Bishop Costen J. Harrell, Charlotte, North Carolina, president of the Methodist College of Bishops, Southeastern Jurisdiction, at the Southeastern Quadrennial Convocation of The Methodist Church, in Charlotte.)

THE GOAL

OF WORLD SERVICE

IS

TO MAKE

THE LORD CHRIST . . .

KNOWN—through Christian Education

LOVED—through Christian Missions

SERVED—through sharing in the extension of the Kingdom of God

WORSHIPED—through developing Holy Habits

A Worthy Financial Goal

Is

"As Much for Others as for the Local Church"

METHODISTS MAY MULTIPLY

THEIR

MINISTRY

Through World Service and

General Benevolences

Self-Containment Is Suicidal

Apportionments Represent

Minimum Needs

Remember Please That—

"World Service Is the BASIC BENEVOLENCE"

This Local Church Stresses Organized Visitation Evangelism

by Everett W. Palmer
Pastor, First Methodist Church
Glendale, California

CHRISTIAN witnessing as represented in Visitation Evangelism has been a normal "men's activity" in our church for a number of years. The initial visitation group was recruited by diligent personal contact. None had done such work before. Each had to be won. Each was convinced that this is the most important work that any human being can do, and was helped to understand his responsibility for undertaking it.

During the first year of the Visitation Program, approximately 200 men were enlisted and trained for work as "fishers of men." Recruits have been added to the group, especially from those they enlisted for Christ and the Church. These replacements have been keeping the total available for evangelistic visitation at approximately 200.

Known as the "Fishermen's Club," they function under the direction of a chairman with a committee, subject to the guidance of the Commission on Membership and Evangelism.

An associate pastor, unusually gifted for responsibility in evangelism and pastoral care, gives direct and constant support to the chairman. All the ministers, of course, work closely with the group. They share responsibility with its leadership in recruiting new men for the work and providing instruction. And, always they go out with the men in the actual work of visitation.

It is urgent for a minister to continue in the constant practice of visitation evangelism with his laymen. When men know that their minister is out facing the same situations which confront them, they are more ready to heed his instruction respecting methods and attitude. Once a layman entertains the thought that the minister is talking about procedures that he is not practicing, asking for endeavor he himself does not undertake, that minister's value as a leader in such work is gone.

We have developed a schedule of work which calls for a "Week of Evangelism" in the fall, usually during early November, and another immediately after Easter. We have found that the spiritual momentum of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter greatly undergird evangelism immediately after Easter. Workers are at their best in spiritual vitality, people visited are most responsive, and prospects gained through use of a special decision card in the Easter services give fresh promise to previously depleted prospect lists.

We have learned that the week after Easter is the most fruitful time for visitation evangelism. To permit a church to slip into spiritual lethargy following Easter is the worst denial of the message that it has been proclaiming. To allow hearts ready for the winning to drift once again into the shadows and sterility of secular living is the worst betrayal of our responsibility as shepherds of God. A week of evangelism following Easter can bring redeeming strength to an area of the modern Church's greatest weakness.

In addition to the week given to evangelism during the fall and spring, we use the fourth Monday of each month, excluding the months of July and August.

We have learned that it is imperative to have an hour for supper, fellowship, instruction, and prayer before going out for work on any evening. Even though some men find it difficult to be present by 6:00 P.M., because of commuting, we begin exactly on the hour. Women who are serving plan to have food on the table promptly at six o'clock.

At six-thirty in the afternoon we begin instruction. We may show a film strip teaching visitation methods, deal with special problems that the men have met previously, share experiences, or in some other way endeavor to pool and share knowledge. At six-fifty we enter a period of devotion and personal dedication. Sometimes the room is darkened and a worship center illumined. Other familiar means for entering a spirit of worship and consecration are used.

At seven o'clock men leave in teams of two with their packets of assignments for the evening. Special care is taken to pair off inexperienced men with those more experienced. The teams return between nine and ten o'clock to report to the Fishermen's Club chairman. They remain to visit informally, sharing happy and rewarding experiences. Occasionally coffee and doughnuts are served.

Vigil is maintained to prevent the visitation from becoming merely a campaign for Church membership. Emphasis is made continually upon keeping the visits Christ-centered and directed at the primary purpose of securing commitments to Christ.

Prospects are secured constantly from the following sources: visitor's card in the pews; registration of attendance by entire congregation at least once a month, sometimes for a period of six consecutive Sundays; follow-through on all non-member parents of church school pupils and non-member attendants of adult classes; upon all non-member families served by the ministers in conducting weddings, baptisms, funerals, or in pastoral counseling. Occasionally, a "concern" card has been used. On this card members give the name and address of some friend, relative, or business acquaintance whom they believe should be visited in the interests of the Christian life and membership in the Church. Also, an alertness is maintained for prospects who might come through other and more unusual sources.

A prospect card is used, providing space for each team calling on the prospect to record information which will be helpful when a follow-up visit is required; also, to give their names and the date of their call. Often prospects are called upon as much as three and four times over a period of two and three years before the final commitment is secured. Usually on any given night of visitation, one half of the commitments secured come from cards carrying the record of one or more previous visits by some team.

—From the TIDINGS book, *Spiritual Life Through Witnessing*, by Everett W. Palmer.

THIS LOCAL CHURCH HAS

Twenty-Two Associate Ministers

A Significant Adventure in Practical Christianity

Walnut Hills-Avondale Methodist Church has stood in the very center of Cincinnati for 107 years. It has been the church of thousands of the city's leaders. Dr. Orien Fifer and Dr. Otto Nall of the *Christian Advocate* were members of this church, as were at one time three general trustees of The Methodist Church. At the present time its fellowship includes a symphony music director, a famed newspaper columnist, a National League baseball umpire, a chairman of the board of one of the nation's greatest tool machine producers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, and hundreds of others. Yet it has no professional associate pastor to aid its minister, Dr. Charles Floyd Murphy, in the administration of its work. Although the Official Board has always been willing to provide a clerical assistant, Dr. Murphy feels that a much more worthy plan is that of laymen serving in the capacity of lay-ministers.

Challenge for Service

Last summer plans were made to challenge the many fine young men of Walnut Hills-Avondale Church to give a month of their time in service. So great was the response that the time had to be shortened to a two-weeks period.

The plan is progressing enthusiastically with lawyers, engineers, chemical researchers, administrators, and professional men. These take turns "pastoring" in the pulpit, in the hospital, and in the parish.

Dr. Murphy carefully "orients" each man as to the fundamentals of the faith, views of The Methodist Church, and the organization and practices of Methodism. He gives each man certain appropriate reading material. Then the lay-minister assists in the Sunday services, leading in all but the pastoral prayer and sermon. After the service, the assistant stands at the door to greet the worshipers.

During each week calls are made to the sick in hospitals and homes. Shut-ins are visited, and persons are contacted to give their hearts to Christ. Each day Dr. Murphy and his lay-minister talk over the problems, the calls and such matters as relate to the very heart of every church.

Shown with Charles Floyd Murphy, pastor (seated, third from right), is a group of the lay associate ministers of Walnut Hills-Avondale Methodist Church.

Significant Values

"The significant values of this plan," says Dr. Murphy, "are manifold. It allows the young leader to know and to be known. It grips his heart with the very core of the Christian ministry. It grants him a new incentive to challenge people with his Christ and causes him to be increasingly proud of his church and the important part it plays in Kingdom building. I believe this plan could be a blessing in 95 per cent of the churches of America. We expect to continue it for a long while in Walnut Hills-Avondale, for nothing has bound this minister and his young laymen more closely together than this adventure in practical Christianity."

THIS LOCAL CHURCH EMPHASIZES EVANGELISM THROUGH MUSIC

by

Robert E. Chiles
Pastor, Concord Methodist Church
Clayton, Ohio

and

Mary Jane Durst
Director of Music
Concord Methodist Church

OUR Christmas Music Festival is one of the most loved occasions in our church year. Last Christmas our festival included more than 135 persons in five choirs which sang anthems and shared carols with an overflow congregation. It was inspiring to see and hear persons of all ages joining in the glad music of the Christmas season.

The festival did not just happen. It reflected several years of consecrated work by a number of people.

Four years ago our church (which then had fewer than 300 members) had one choir—the Chancel Choir, composed of a fine group of adults who added immeasurably to our common worship. That year we added our second musical group, the Wesley Choir, for children of Junior age. Parents helped to make robes; and several ladies began regular service as choir mothers, caring for attendance, transportation, socials, and robes. This choir has grown from 20 to 45 members. It has appeared several times on local television programs.

Three years ago we inaugurated duplicate services at morning worship. The Chapel Choir, for intermediate and high school youth, was organized to share the ministry of music at the early service on alternate Sundays with the children of the Wesley Choir.

At the year's Music Festival, kindergarten children were trained, robed, and christened the Cherub Choir. They lifted their tiny voices in praise along with those of the three other choirs.

This past year primary children, the only group for which there had been no provision made, were invited to become part of the newly organized Carol Choir. All of our choirs are now robed. The three older choirs have weekly rehearsals and regular singing schedules. The two younger choirs rehearse several weeks prior to the quarterly services of worship at which they sing.

Attendance Doubled

During the four years that our musical program has grown, our church has also grown. Attendance at both worship and Sunday school has about doubled, church membership has increased by 200, our budget has tripled, and our church is now in the midst of a $200,000 expansion program. We are convinced that these marks of growth are not unrelated to the increases in our choirs from one to five and in choir members from 20 to 140.

The multiple choir program, of which we are now justly proud, is beneficial to our church and its program in many ways, all of which probably are more important than the marked manner in which it has helped increase attendance. The choirs prove profitable to their members in at least three ways.

First, the children are taught to worship by actual participation in the worship service itself. We emphasize that they are taking part in a ministry of music and not rendering a performance which parents and friends are invited to witness and enjoy. Sharing regularly in worship helps point the children toward the Christian faith and life. It builds a loyalty and devotion to the Church which, for many, will endure through the years. The values of similar training given choir boys in other communions has been demonstrated again and again.

Second, the choir members, young and old alike, are given a significant part in the central act of the Christian congregation. What they do in worship, they do for God. This makes a difference to the church and, therefore, to them. The multiple choir program affords the privilege of a musical ministry to a large number of persons besides those trained and skilled adults to

Photo at top of page: Combined choirs participate in Christmas Music Festival, December, 1954, at Concord Methodist Church.

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The multiple choir program strengthens and serves the church no less than it benefits the choir members. First of all, such an organization of music in the church is a very effective means of using a sizeable group of people in the church program. Responsibilities related to the choirs provide additional opportunities for service as choir mothers, accompanists, and the like. We have found that many of the families who become members of our church were either first interested in or eventually became an integral part of the life of the congregation through one or more of our choirs.

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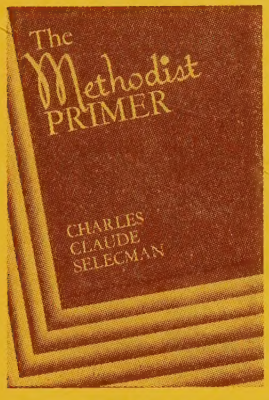

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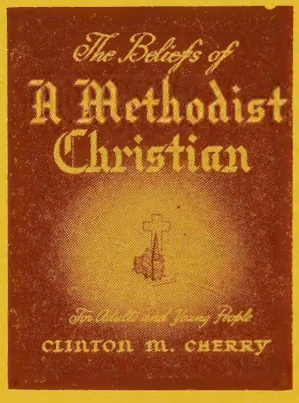

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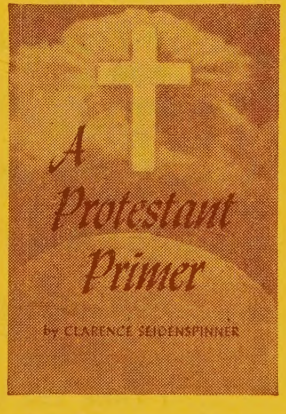

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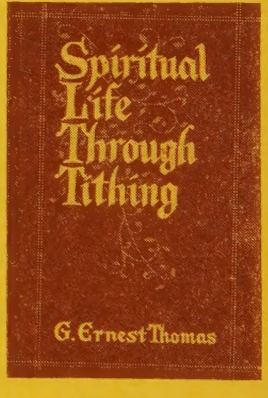

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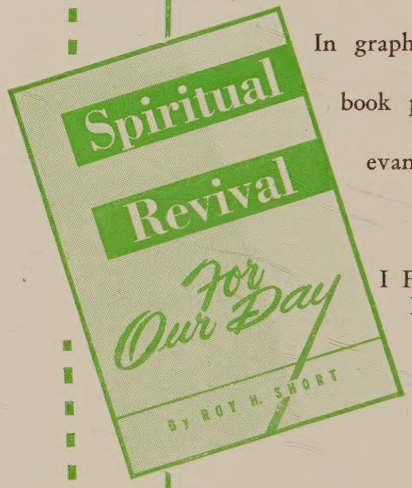

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